A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No. 30 OCTOBER 1987
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BRITAIN'S BIGGEST SELLING COMMODORE MAG GETS EVEN BIGGER 77,483 AND CLIMBING

ZAP! 64

MONTHLY REVIEW FOR COMMODORE SOFTWARE



BUILDING ON SUCCESS
THE SHOOT 'EM UP CONSTRUCTION KIT
PREVIEWED

BUBBLE BOBBLE
THE FINEST CONVERSION YET?

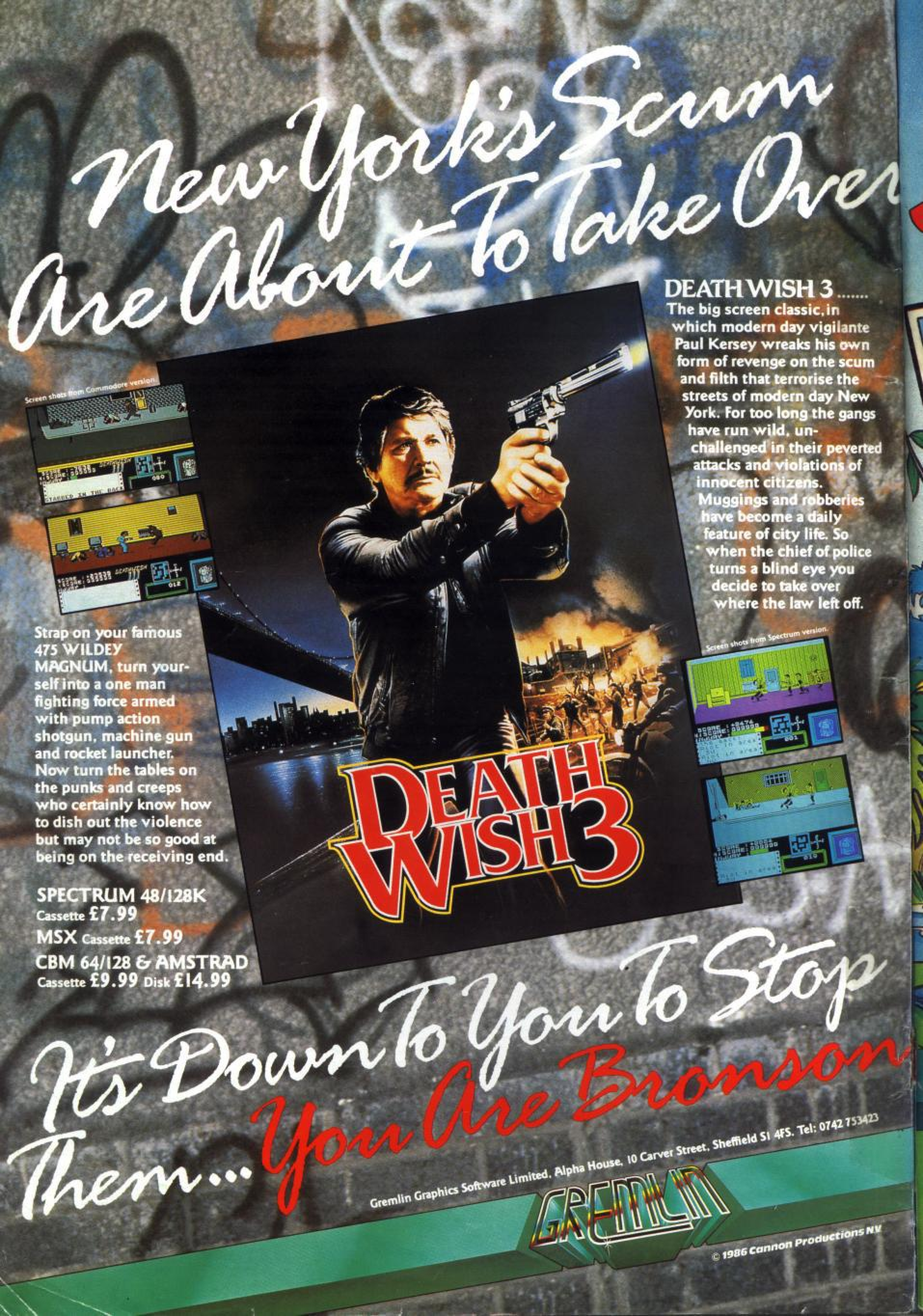
MORPHEUS THE FIRST SIGHTING

MEGA APOCALYPSE
CRAZY COMETS SURPASSED

RED L.E.D.
THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME

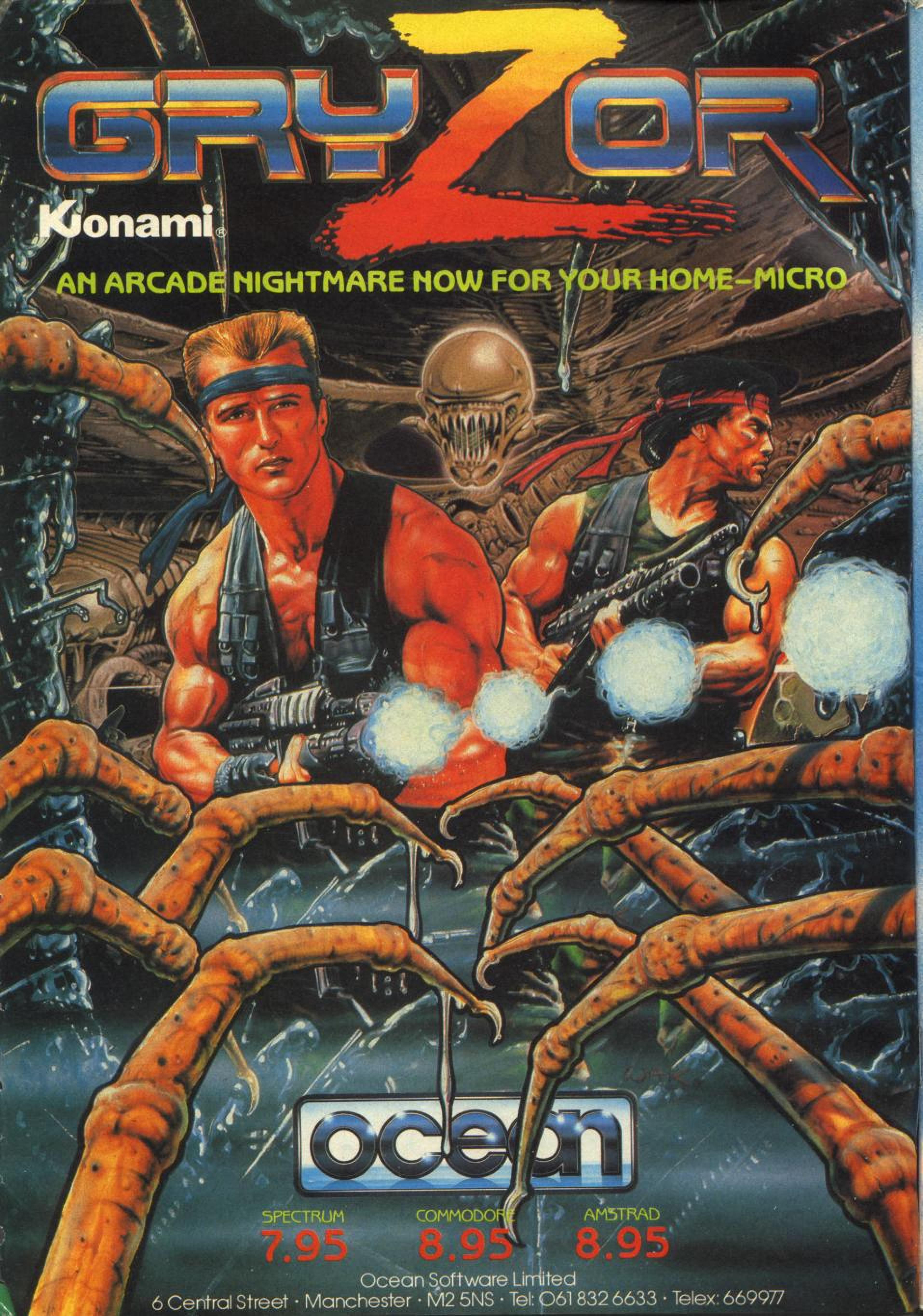
WIN! WIN! WIN!
A UNIQUE ARCADE BRIEFCASE – COURTESY OF OCEAN
AN ADVANCED AIRBRUSH FROM RAINBIRD
AN ADVENTURE DAY OUT WITH MIRRORSOFT

DEATH ISS! JUDGE DEATH – EXCITING NEWS


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A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION

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Average monthly sales for the period
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IRREGULARS

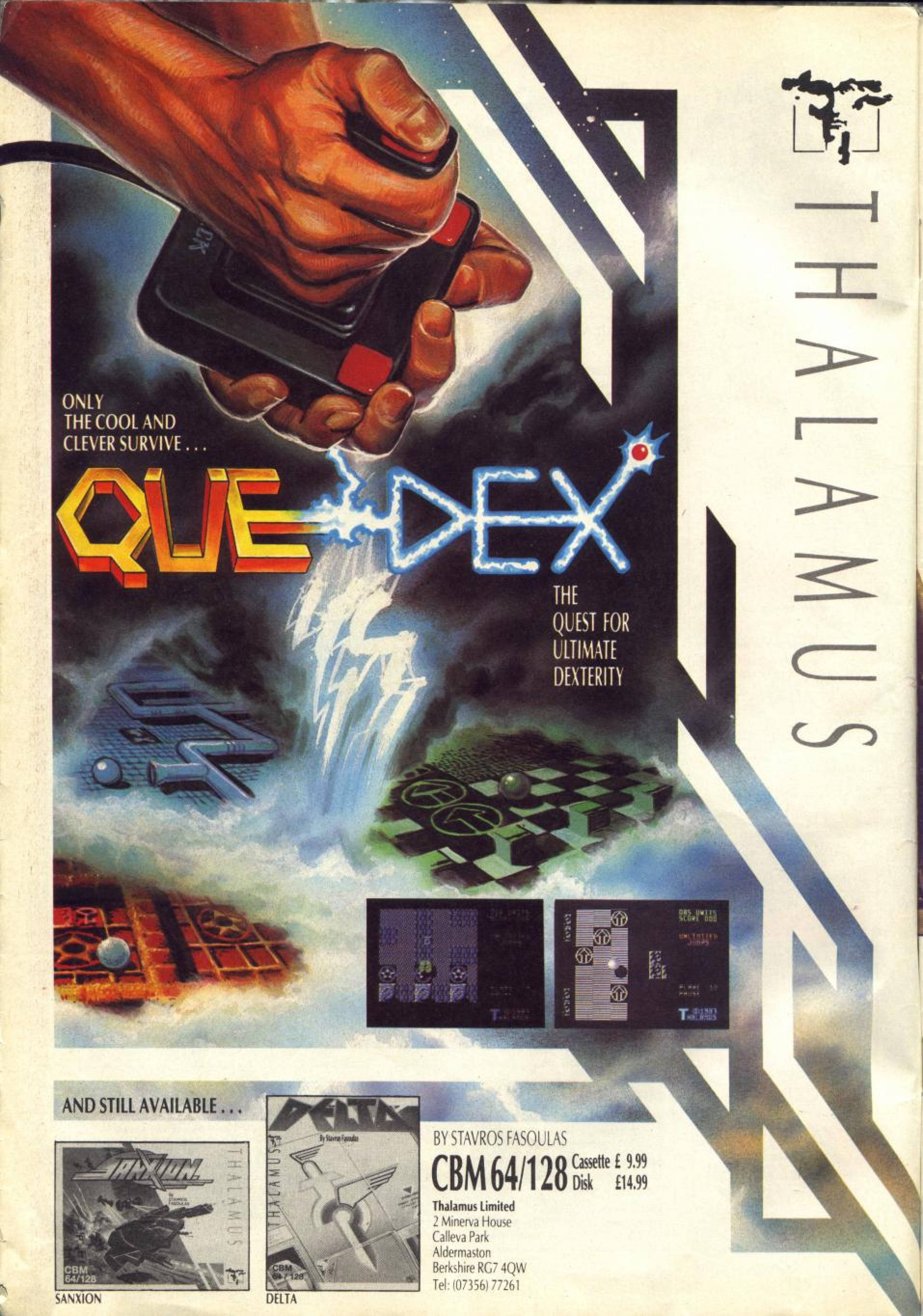
FEATURES

OUTSTANDING IN OCTOBER

COMPETITIONS



As far as the eye could see there was sand . . . nothing but sand. Unless of course you counted all the kangaroos on pogo sticks, and of course that little kiosk which doesn't sell Perrier, oh and let's not forget the guy pulling the scarf off the sword so that his girlfriend will give him a bite of her Turkish Delight. Apart from all this the desert was empty – it's always the same on a Friday. The next ZZAP!'s on sale on October 8th – last one in's a cissy!


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IT'S NOT WHAT YOU DO . . .

77,483 AND RISING

It's that time of year again where the Audit Bureau of Circulations reveal the sales figures for the first six months of the year. And though we've never been ones to sample our own trumpets, we're always prepared to allow the figures to speak for themselves.

Better still, we'll let the opposition sing our praises, as a certain Mr Pratt from EMAP Publications has recently said the following with reference to ZZAP! . . .

'We recognise some of the devices by which they've done so exceptionally well and quite frankly we'll be taking some leaves out of their book.'

This is very gratifying (after all imitation is the sincerest form of flattery), but I can't help feeling that it's a pity that they can't come up with a few ideas of their own.

Anyway, back to business. This month sees yet more changes in your favourite Commodore magazine, not least of which is the introduction of a special budget section. For some time now we have felt that budget games neither need nor deserve the same in-depth coverage as other software. For this reason we will now be covering lower-priced games in a separate section, without the extensive ratings which are now exclusively devoted to full-priced software.

Another development is the arrival at last of our long promised Play By Mail section. Brendon Kavanagh kicks off this month with a brief guide to the rudiments of the genre, and month by month he'll be bringing us the latest developments in the world of postal gaming.

This month also sees the last adventure section hosted by The White Wizard. After a career with ZZAP! which stretches back almost to the beginning, the bearded one is off to cast spells and hexes in pastures new – we wish him well . . . but watch out for his successor next month.

Speaking of corpulent technical writers (were we?), Gary Liddon would like to apologise for the fact that his humourous asides are missing from this issue – this temporary absence is unavoidable, because Gaz is hard at work writing the world's greatest trousers joke for a forthcoming episode of Terry and June. Don't worry though fans, the gluttonous guru will be back next month with his 'bit in the middle'. Almost as an afterthought, Gaz also wishes to say sorry for a teensy mistake in last month's section . . . three lines after the label 'SM' in the second listing, #3 should have read #7. We hope that didn't cause you too much inconvenience.

Hold it! Before you rush off to read this fun-filled issue, let me tell you about a few things which will be coming up over the next few months. Our next issue will contain a glorious 3-D section, the special glasses, and a fabulous tips supplement as well as a host of other features. 'And how will they follow that', I hear you cry. Easy, the following month's ZZAP! will contain a once-off collector's issue of 2000 AD, *and* a 16 page supplement on the latest generation of 16-bit computers – don't miss it.

That's it for this month. Be careful out there, and look me up if you make it to the PCW show.

Ciarán Brennan



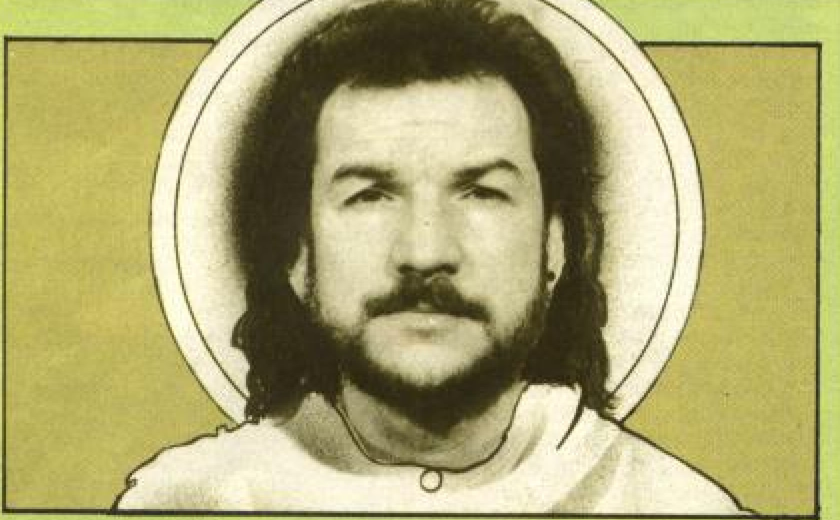
GAMES REVIEWED

ADVERTISERS INDEX



He slammed his muscled carcass to the heaving deck of Boots Plc, rolling backwards like a used surgical glove. The year was 1981. It was up to him, the young Mel Croucher to save the British Computer Games Industry from terminal boredom. Twenty-two kilos of CBM pet strapped to his back, a suicide pill clenched between his oiled fetlocks, he shook the sweat from his long flowing tresses and hurled a C20 blindly into the advancing horde of business suits. 'Eat tape! Scumbats!' he barked, shrugging off their pathetic retaliatory fire of Ping-Pong, Invaders and Hangman. Croucher knew that they couldn't beat him, those faceless dorks sinking into the stinking swamp of copycat shoot 'em ups, as he lobbed a low-yield tactical publicity-stunt grenade in their paths. 'Up your Asteroids!' he snarled, scenting victory permeating through the stench of their blanket-bombed press releases. This was guerilla warfare, and they were the monkeys. By 1984, he had won. Home computing was a shambles. He had single-handedly introduced celebrity endorsement, cartoon-strip advertising, prize adventures, musical soundtracks, interactive movies, sex, humour and filth into computer gaming. Croucher was the biggest cult in the business. And then, Tuesday evening, after tea and compulsory prayers . . . he vanished! All that was left was a geostationary hologram orbiting above the Olympia decorated with the words 'so long, suckers' in braille.

Within hours the bankruptcies began: Soppy software houses, huckster hardware manufacturers, dopey distributors, cruddy magazines, tacky tape duplicators, one by one they went bust. One by one they stabbed themselves in the foot, made garters out of their own guts, went insane or worse still, were bought out by US Gold or Activision. Where was Croucher? His disciples erected rubber shrines to his memory, and awaited the second coming. Rumours began to spread that he had been sighted in Greece, restoring the ruins of Melina Mercouri; that he was holed up inside Matthew Smith; that he was Fergus McNeil's illegitimate father; that he had changed his name to Mel and Kim. And then it happened. A message from The Man came through to us here at ZZAP! Maybe we should have left that ouija board alone. Perhaps the knotted garlic, silver bullets and crucifix needed changing. Or was it because of the spelling mistake in our advert which read 'Rant-Boy wanted'. Anyway, it's too late now. We've rubbed his magic lamp, and we can't put him back. Once a month a slavering giant Irish Setter with burning eyes and a free bus pass slinks into the Editor's office, with a floppy disc clenched between someone else's teeth. We still don't know where Croucher hangs out, but the information on that disc is too incredible to ignore. If you can handle it, we can print it, in this, the first extract from . . .



Mel Croucher's UNDER THE BAUD-WALK

St. SAMANTHA's DAY, (Bank Holiday, Lapland)

I know why Domark have had the rights to **Jeffrey Archer**'s pitiful novel for over six months, without telling anyone. But it's a matter of honour, so I will leave it to the midget, ex-bankrupt, ex-Deputy Chairman of the Tory Party to explain all at the press conference arranged by Solution PR's **Dave Carlos**. ILR radio interviewer **Karen Ross** assures me that Mr Archer could not possibly have a spotty back, and I believe her – she's my sister. *Not A Penny More Not A Penny Less* (cos I'm leaving two grand at Victoria Station) will soon be available for your Commodore. To save you reading the book, the millionaire swindler turns out to be the father of the heroine, and he gets his come-uppance on page 203.

SECOND WEDNESDAY AFTER BLOODTEST

I discuss sex with the Doctor, who is full of little surprises. Not only is **Dr. Tim Langdell** the mysterious force behind Softek and some Irish guitarist called The Edge, but his real name is Cheri. Like me, Dr. Langdell is a Scorpio, (passionate, ruthless and with excellent teeth), unlike me Dr. Langdell is a blonde Californian hippy who has designs on my parrot. Today, she sends it a telex. Unfortunately, my parrot named Percy, cannot possibly go to a home where 'Cheri' freely admits that she turned her anteater named Matthew into a toucan named Charlie. Should such weirdos be allowed to run software houses? Especially when they offer me plain brown envelopes full of coffee, lasagne and clip-on Garfield brooches. Big Fat Hairy Deal. What's more, she's not even a proper doctor! When I ask for a diagnosis of an outbreak of naked breasts on cassette covers, she claims to be a doctor of literature!!!

ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH OF VLAD THE IMPALER (Full Moon)

What are the young, thrusting executives of computer software up to these days? CRL Supremo and OINK thinkalike **Clem Chambers** tells me that he's going into the straw business, 'cos so many people are clutching at them.'

NEW YEAR'S EVE (on Krypton)

I discuss sex with Mirrorsoft's flame-haired bossette **Pat Bitten**. 'Why is the damsel advertising *Defender of the Crown* flat on her back draped across that horse?' I wonder. The answer is very simple, 'With boobs that size she couldn't stand up!' comes her honest answer.* Once bitten twice shy? I await her threatened delivery of a single red rose with fluttering heart.

**ZZAP! readers are advised to savour the full, frank and fearless in-depth feature Software Sex, in the first edition of The Games Machine.*

FIRST FRIDAY OF KIPPER SNORTING SEASON

The Editor of this magazine is holding my favourite painting of Adolf Hitler hostage until I give him my secret cure for premature baldness. No dice, Brennan, not until you stop putting silly little marks over your Christian Name. 'Ciarán'? What kind of a handle is that? Where would we end up if we all went around decorating ourselves with Dago offcuts and typographic rejects. Mel Croucher means 'to vomit honey' in French, whereas Melcro Ucher is Hungarian for 'my manhood is trapped in this modern zipper.' Before we can say Magnus Magnussun, (which is Icelandic for Robert Robinson), we'll all be as crazy as Thalamus, where they use the low-scoring tiles off their Scrabble board to give their programmers names like **Stavros Fasoulas**, and the high-scoring tiles to name his games. After *Sanxion*, he is about to inflict *Quedex* on your dictionaries, which notches up 75 if you put it on a triple-word-score. I am assured that *Quedex* stands for 'Quest For Ultimate Dexterity', which I believe is something to do with the art of nose-picking, or worse. Much worse.

PENICILLIN DAY (Bangkok)

As we all know, the capital of Thailand is named after its principle industry, which is why System 3 heavyweight **Tim Best** is arranging to fly a horde of deadbeats, liggers and perverts out there, to launch a software entertainment that I refuse to publicise until I get my ticket. They can easily afford to pack me into their overnight baggage by flogging off the Ferrari that's been rotting in the garage since a certain member of staff lost his licence. So providing I receive this wee bribe in a plain brown envelope before closing time, I promise not to tell readers that Tim's current nickname is Hagar The Horrible.

AH SOULS DAY

This entry is dedicated to the memory of **Roger Kean**. Kean was not only one of the finest dancers, but also a great entertainer and man who always strived to perfect his skills – an example to us all.

SHUTTERDAY

I discover **Fergus McNeil** floating among some bullrushes, near one of my rubber shrines. He freely admits that I am indeed his creator, and that he was conceived in a weak solution of vodka inside my test tube. I am allowed to tell you that Delta 4 and Abstract Concepts may be the same people under a different name, but I am forbidden to say that Fergus is in the process of cobbling up a superb new adventure system, comprising the best bits stolen from Infocom, 'cos they're brilliant', from Magnetic Scrolls, 'cos they're not bad' and from Level 9, 'cos they're . . . er, near.' Where did I go wrong with the lad's training?



When you're living in the city you gotta be tough, 'Cos the alleys are dark and the streets are rough.
If you're looking for a rumble and the rumble looks back, You had better know how to survive the attack.
So you'd better just listen to this rap I'm bustin' —
In this life you know there's no trustin',
Any man, any bird, any fish, any rat,
Any creature on Earth,
And especially us CATS!

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FLUNKY

Piranha, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick or keys

Lucky, lucky you. After spending a couple of months on the dole, you've struck it lucky by landing a job at Buckingham Palace as a flunky to the Royal Family. As such, you have to keep your employers (The Queen, Andy, Fergie, Charles and Di) happy by pandering to their each and every whim.

The action is viewed side-on, with the main character able to move 'in' and 'out' of the screen. At the start, Flunky walks out of his office into Buck House and is immediately told by the head butler to 'light all the fires' – an easy job, which is carried out by using the box of matches which Flunky already carries.



Flunky's okay. The sprites are large and colourful and it does have a certain charm, but the action's slow and the puzzles are slightly odd. I think that its greatest appeal lies in the fact that strutting around the workplace in the role of dogsbody seems strangely familiar to me. The whole thing seems to amble along quite happily, hardly generating any sense of excitement or urgency – even a confrontation with the Palace guard brings hardly a murmur (even if you do lose a life through it!). Perhaps this would appeal to the younger player (that's probably why I liked it), and if that's its target market then it should hit the bull –however, Flunky doesn't really have a lot to offer the more sophisticated player.

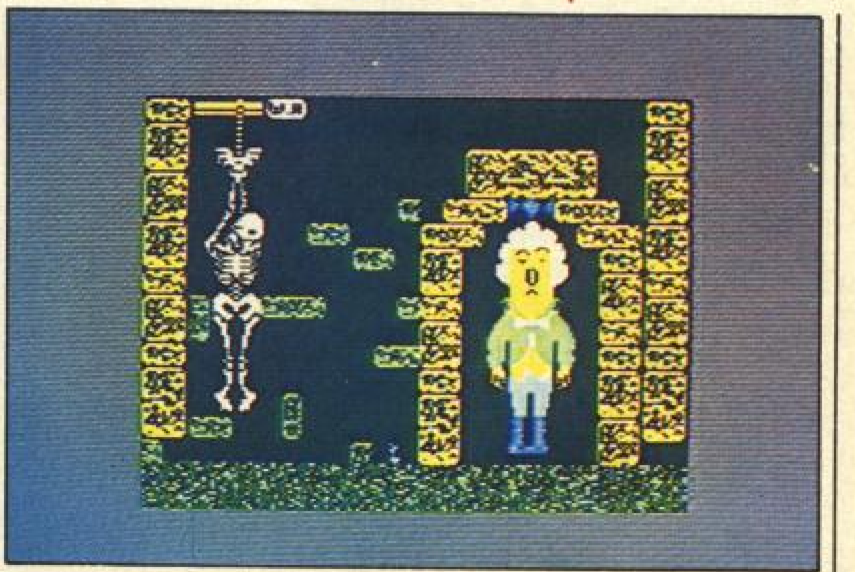


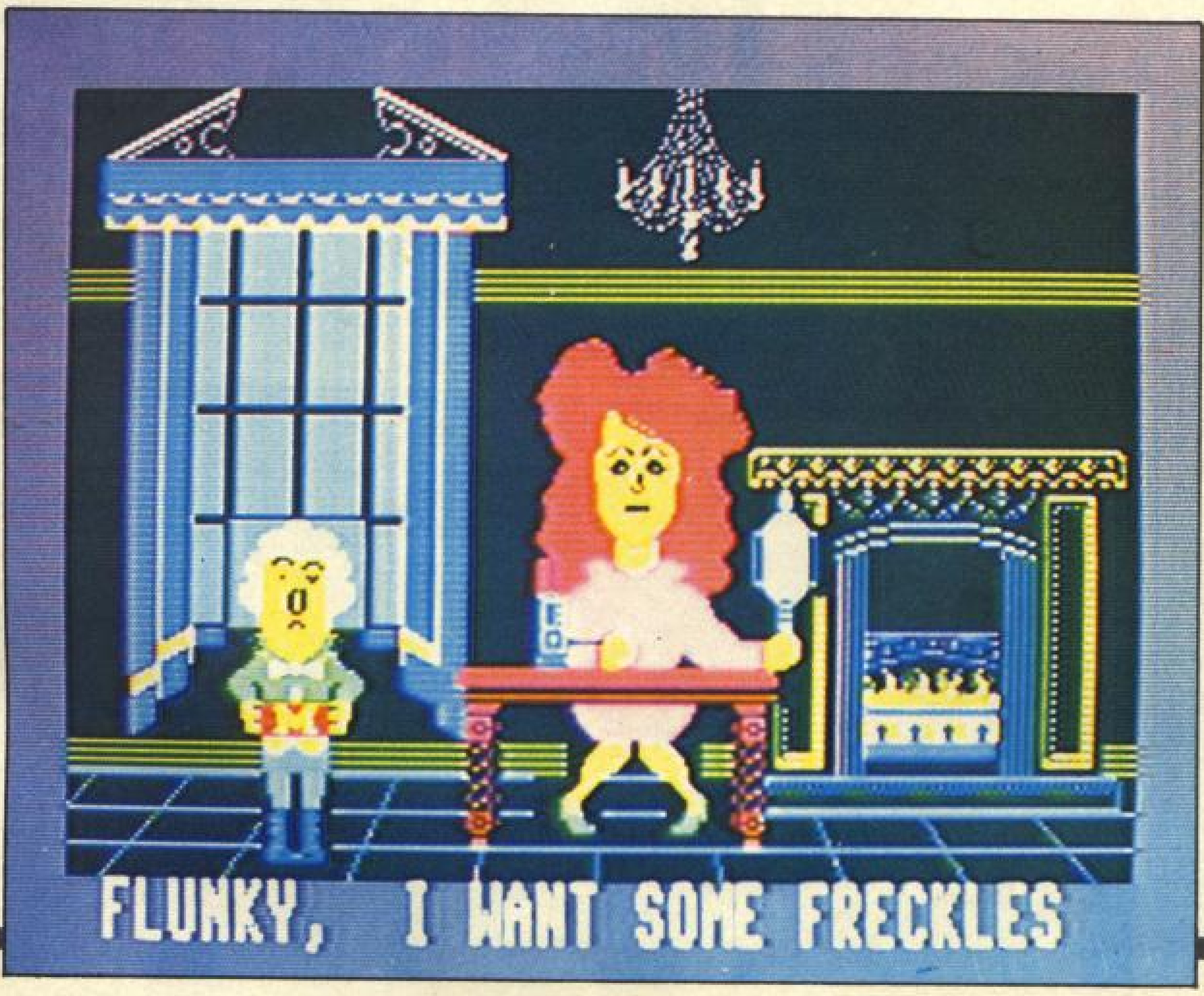
I wasn't particularly enamoured with Trapdoor, and this is very, very similar. The enormous graphics are admirable, and the extremely well-animated caricatures are particularly appealing – but other than that there's very little in the gameplay that appealed. The five tasks are pretty offbeat and don't offer much scope for long-term play – consequently, once the game has been completed it loses its appeal. Trapdoor fans may think otherwise, but personally I couldn't find enough in it to put it near the top of my shopping list.

For some strange reason, Flunky is only allowed access to certain parts of the Palace if he is carrying the correct Royal's autograph. If he hasn't got the right signature, a guard steps out smartly and opens fire, removing one of the hero's five lives in the process. An autograph is collected whenever a task is completed, and to gain access to the final room, all five Royal signatures should be collected.

The five tasks are pretty peculiar, ranging from fetching a toy boat for Prince Andrew's bath and getting Di her wig to giving Fergie freckles! Each of these jobs is completed by using the objects that are carried at the start of the game, or by picking up and utilising others which are found around the royal residence.

If all signatures are collected within the set time, the Queen's throne room is entered where the final task can be completed. That done, your days as a royal flunky are successfully completed and you can retire happily with pots of cash!





► Gorgeous, pouting Fergie demands some freckles from the unflappable Flunky



Royalists should steer well clear of Piranha's latest release which definitely has anarchic overtones! The caricatures are quite good – they're all very recognisable – and the graphics are cleverly implemented throughout. In fact it's quite surprising how well the Commodore's hi-res mode can work when it wants to. There's obviously been a lot of thought put into the design of the game to stop it looking a real mess and having oddly-coloured attributes over the place. The gameplay itself, however, is slightly on the eccentric side – some people may have to think hard and long over the problems involved. This kind of game doesn't appeal to me, but I'm sure that fans of Trapdoor will love it.

PRESENTATION 77%
A restart option, and a rarely useful choice of languages.

GRAPHICS 82%
Large and well animated characters – shame about the bland backdrops.

SOUND 63%
A couple of suitable jingles which are let down by the jarring sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 67%
The tasks are quite hard to work out at times, and consequently it's tough for a first-time player.

LASTABILITY 71%
There are only five tasks to complete, although they're difficult enough to keep you puzzling.

OVERALL 68%
A competent arcade adventure which should appeal to *Trapdoor* fans.



BUBBLE BOBBLE

Firebird, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

● A stunning conversion of Taito's surreal arcade machine

ZZAP! GOLD MEDAL AWARD

Now it is the start of a fantastic journey! Let's make a journey to the cave of monsters.' And so begins a strange and surreal adventure through 100 caves filled with bubble-spitting Brontosaurii, horrific hostiles, exotic fruits, wonderful presents and a large assortment of generally useful items. Each cave consists of a screen filled with platforms, and progression from one to another occurs when the entire screen has been cleared.

An initial decision is made between either one or two-player mode. Choose the single player option however, and a second player can still join in at any time during the action. When the start button is pressed, the Brontosaurii appear at the bottom left and right. Shortly after, the hostile cave-dwellers emerge and rush around the network of platforms. These are deadly to touch, and should be avoided at all costs.

The only means of defence are the bubbles which a 'saurus spits when the fire button is depressed. A bubble travels forward a short distance before floating upward, and any creature caught in its horizontal path becomes trapped, and is helpless about its predicament. Now the fun begins – if the bronto jumps up and pops the bubble with his tough horny head, the creature within bounces around the screen, stunned, and turns into a bannana which is collected for an extra score. Bubbles always mass at the top of the screen, and a cluster of bubbled enemies can be bust at the same time, resulting in different fruits worth bigger points.

Greed is a terrible thing though, and if a dinosaur waits too long for bubbles to mass, the creatures can escape. Their constant struggling weakens the bubble wall and they break through after 15 seconds or so. An escapee is a horrible sight, all red and angry, and rushing around the screen in a complete strop, looking for the brontosaurus responsible for his imprisonment.

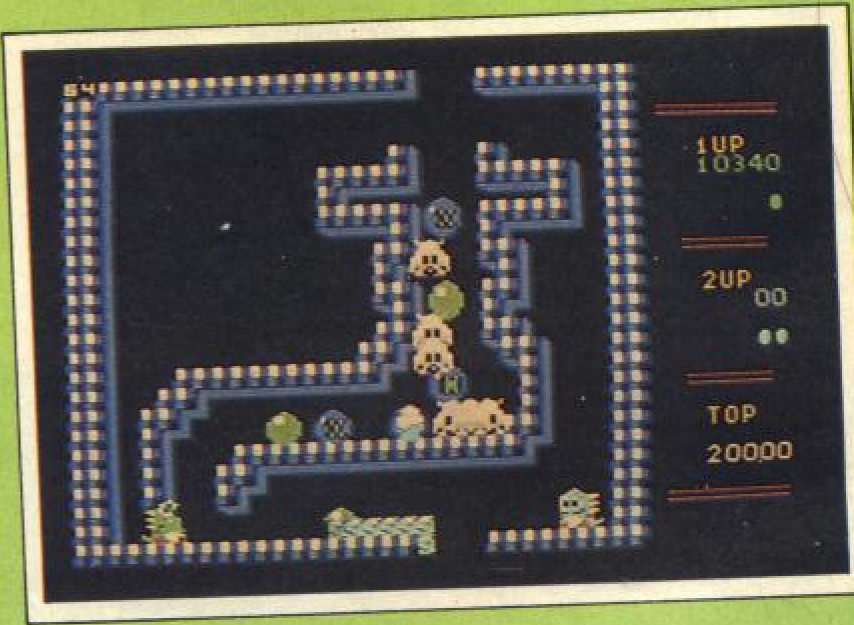
Another hazard which appears if a screen is not cleared quickly enough is the dreaded Baron von Blubba. This indestructible horror emerges to track down the heroic dinos, eventually giving his fatal touch if all the other creatures aren't destroyed quickly enough.

Throughout a level, bubbles float up from the bottom of the screen. Some of these are water-filled and cause a mini-flood when burst. This then pours down the screen, sweeping away any creature that stands in its path. Other bubbles contain letters, with an extra life awarded if the word E X T E N D is formed. On some screens, bubbles containing lightning can also be burst to send deadly bolts of electricity whizzing across the screen.

Goodies appear randomly, either giving extra points, or endowing the prehistoric pair with special bronto-powers. Trainers for example, give a Bronto extra speed, and a Lamp either gives faster bubble-producing abilities or extra fire-spitting capabilities. Sometimes an object sets off a reaction – such as filling the screen with water, killing all dwellers within, causing a huge explosion or sending huge bolts of lightning from above. On very rare occasions, collecting an item makes all the hostiles disappear and the screen becomes filled with objects – which are collected within a 20 second time limit for a 100,000 points bonus.

As the dinosaurs progress through the levels, all manner of creatures are encountered. Early levels are inhabited by square-headed morons, whereas later screens contain boulder-lobbing ghosts, flying fish, helicopter hippos, springing things, gremlins and missile-dropping Space Invaders. When the 100th screen

► A trickle of water rushes down the hole – hopefully it took a baddie with it

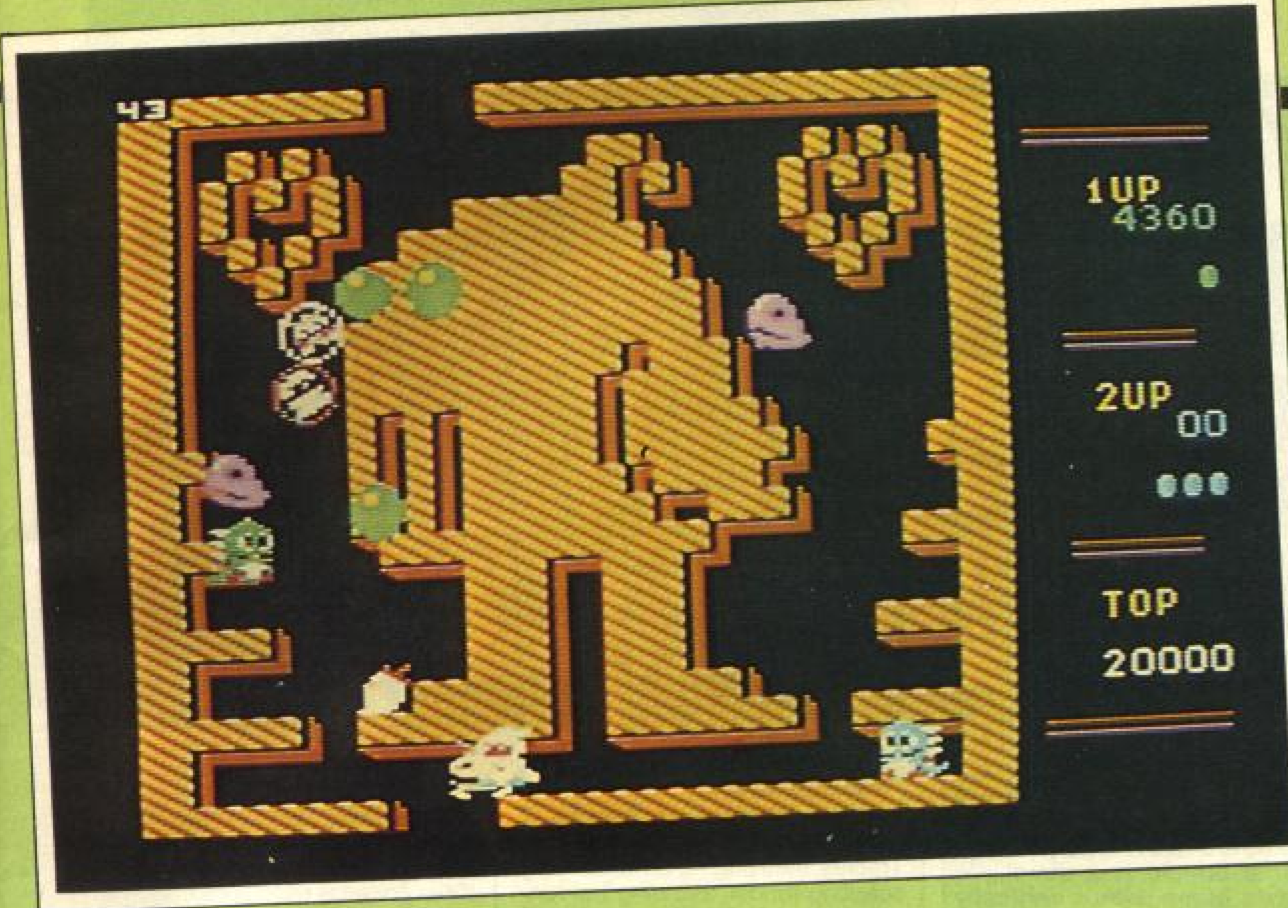


► One of the more devious screens on the excellent conversion of Bubble Bobble

I'd only ever seen the arcade machine once before playing the 64 version, so I'm not terribly prejudiced one way or the other as to the quality of the conversion. The game is technically adept, with heaps of things whizzing all over the screen and the great graphics – endowed with loads of 'cute' appeal and plenty of character. It's the gameplay however, that brings the game into its own – it's unbelievably addictive. If you buy this on a Saturday, you can kiss the rest of your weekend goodbye! Having seen most of the 100 screens (we've got a cheat version here in the office), I can safely say that you're in for a pretty tough time. Play on your own – or better still, play with a friend, but either way – play! This has got to be one of the best platform games of all time . . . if not *the* best!







▶ If the baddie-bearing bubbles aren't burst soon, they'll break out, turn pink and go into a mega-strop

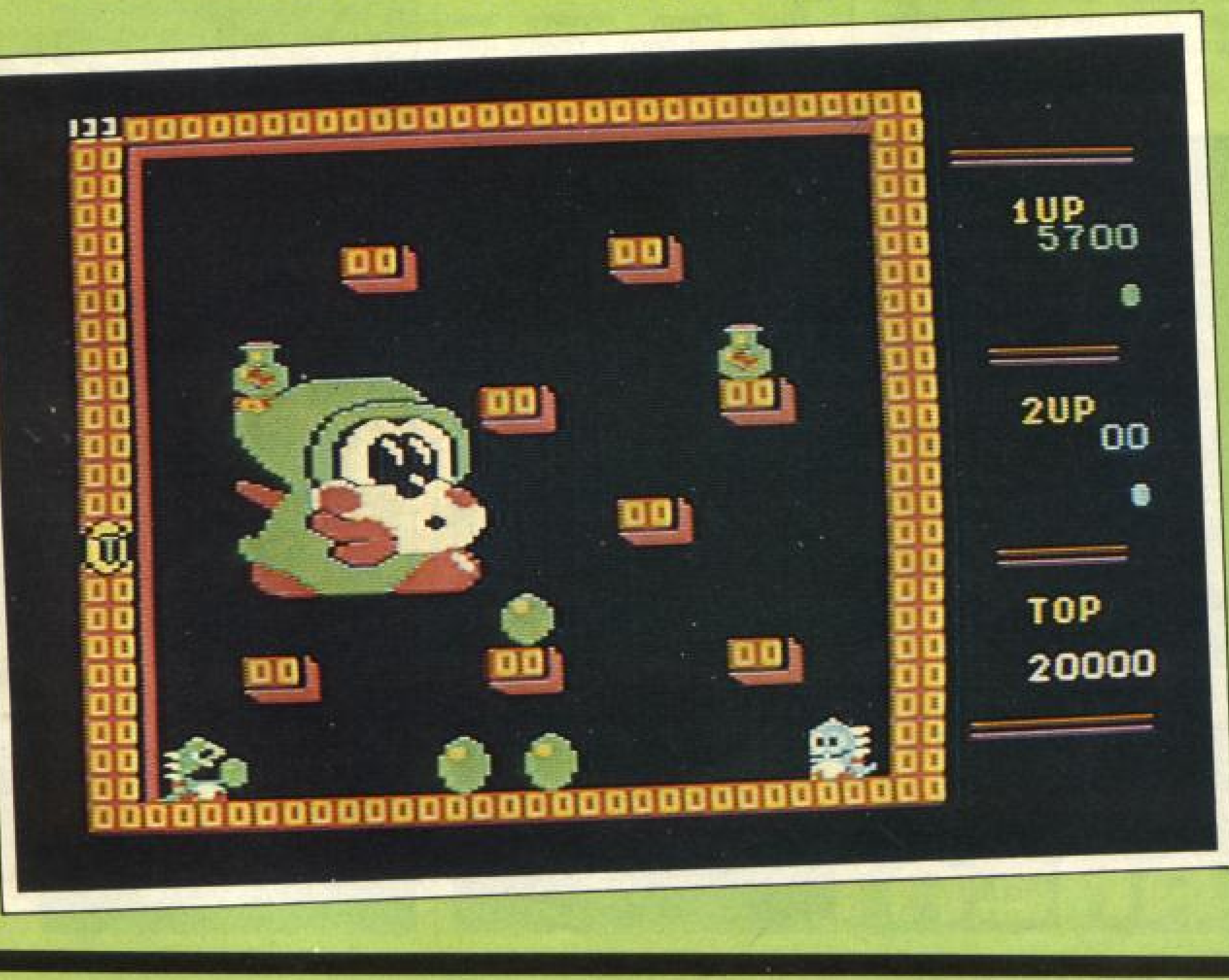
It's a rare and beautiful occasion when a great arcade machine is perfectly converted – but thankfully this is one such event. No matter what format it appears in, there are very few games which generate as much fun as Bubble Bobble – and even watching two other people playing is marvellously entertaining! After all, this is the game with everything that your average gamesplayer could ever want – Wacdonald's fries, the evil count, cuddly monsters and alcohol-free lager! Although it's basically a two-player game, it's still a real pleasure to play on your own. So go out and get it now and experience some fun graphics, silly sounds, whacky gameplay and, most importantly, a lot of laughs.





Bubble Bobble is one of my favourite arcade games at the moment, and I must confess to waiting for this conversion with some trepidation. After all, there have been so many disappointments lately, with pale, bastardised imitations of original arcade games being the usual result of a conversion. Imagine my surprise when Firebird's conversion turned out to be one of the finest yet seen on the Commodore. All the features of the 100 screen arcade game have been included, and the graphics, music and gameplay are about as close as you're ever going to get. The action is maddeningly addictive, and I've been playing it solidly since it came into the office. There's so much depth, and so many different features, like working out how to trigger the mega-bonuses and how to break into the hidden screen. Bubble Bobble is simply superb – a licensing triumph which shouldn't be missed at any cost.

▶ The final screen – beware the attack of the extremely large (but still quite cute) cave-dweller



is reached, the extremely large chief cave-dweller appears and is bubbled many, many times before dropping the final curtain and joining the choir invisible.

Finally, there's a secret screen which is revealed when a special fruit-collecting sequence is completed. Can *you* find it?

PRESENTATION 92%
One or two player mode, a hidden level, and good on-screen presentation.

GRAPHICS 84%
Extremely 'cute' and highly detailed sprites, finished off with great use of colour.

SOUND 87%
A Jolly soundtrack plays throughout, exactly like the arcade game's.

HOOKABILITY 97%
Instant appeal and massive addiction.

LASTABILITY 91%
One hundred screens of highly addictive action, with plenty of depth.

OVERALL 97%
A superlative conversion which retains all of the fun and features of the original.

THE TUBE

Quicksilva, £8.95 cass, joystick with keys

Having suffered a severe power drain, the good ship Tracker II has drifted into a black hole – only to be thrown out on the other side of the galaxy, right next to an awesome alien construction . . . The Tube!

This huge device is an alien space waste disposal system, drawing rubbish in through one end to be stored for later collection and re-use.

Taking manual control of Tracker II, you guide the vessel through the Tube, attempting to restore the ship's energy banks and escape the sanitary prison.

There are three main areas to the Tube, the first being the Transfer Zone. Here, a large forcefield drags your ship into the gaping maw of the alien vessel. Caught in its web-like energy matrix, other alien vessels survive by draining the power from ships passing through this tractor beam. Before entering the Tube itself, an attack of these ships is fended off, lest the ship's energy be diminished completely leaving it totally helpless.

On safely reaching the Tube entrance, the Defence Mechanism Tunnel is entered. Here, a series of defence systems attempt to weaken vessels prior to entering the capture area. If, as in your case, ships prove to be capable of damaging the Tube, the defence systems attempt to destroy it instead. You must carefully guide Tracker II through the horizontally scrolling tunnel, avoiding the tunnel walls and missiles which are launched against you.

Successfully negotiating the Defence Mechanism Tunnel facilitates entry to the Capture Area, where previously captured ships are stored ready for the Tube's constructors to dismantle and devour them at their convenience. Many ships still retain a high power level, and docking with these enables you to drain off much needed energy, and also to collect their unwanted energy crystals which may then be used to bring your ship back up to full power. Docking is carried out automatically by positioning the Tracker II in front of the required vessel. Access to the ship is gained by initiating a colour-coded wiring sequence which effectively opens the ship's hatchway.

Four energy crystals are needed, and once a crystal has been collected, you are transported to the next section of the Tube, where a second level of three zones is confronted.



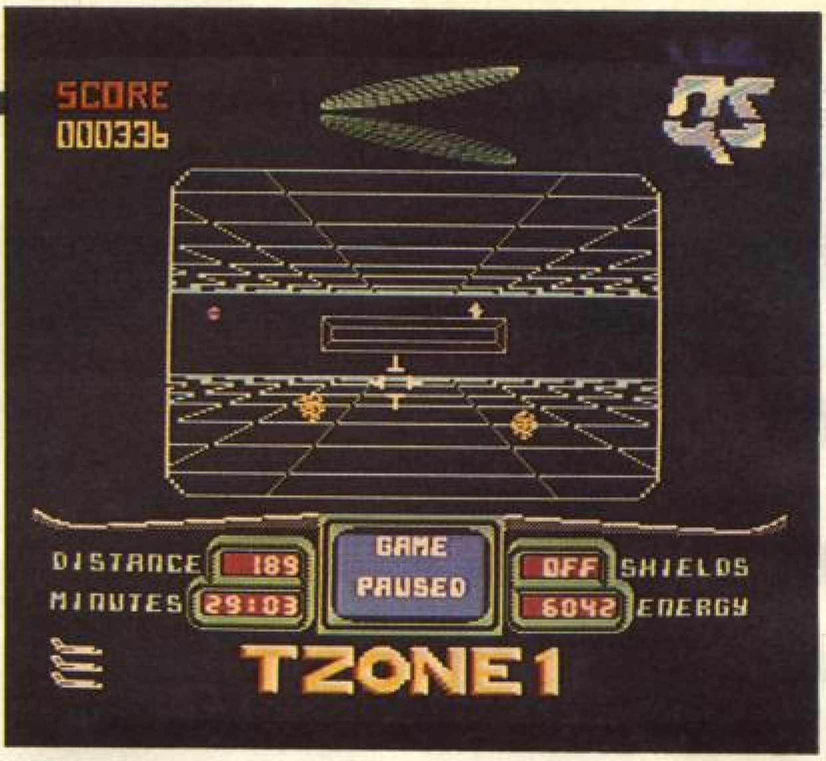
The Tube is not really up to the standard we've come to expect. The graphics are reasonable, but otherwise there's very little in the action to make progress even a tiny bit enjoyable. Having endured the tedium of the first screen, I found the second screen dull, and the return to the start after the loss of a life is very frustrating. The third screen is the best of the three, but even that cannot be recommended as it's far too easy. This is an unattractive game, which doesn't offer anything like enough playability.



There are some really nice ideas and effects behind The Tube, but unfortunately they haven't been implemented to their full potential. The first section is remarkably easy, and it's possible to leave the computer and do something else while the level is cleared. The second is merely a Scramble derivative that suffers from a sluggish and unwieldy control method, and the third (the best of the bunch) is a simplistic puzzle game with a vertically scrolling landscape thrown in as an afterthought. If a little more thought had been put into the gameplay, The Tube might have been fun. As it stands, it just isn't challenging enough.

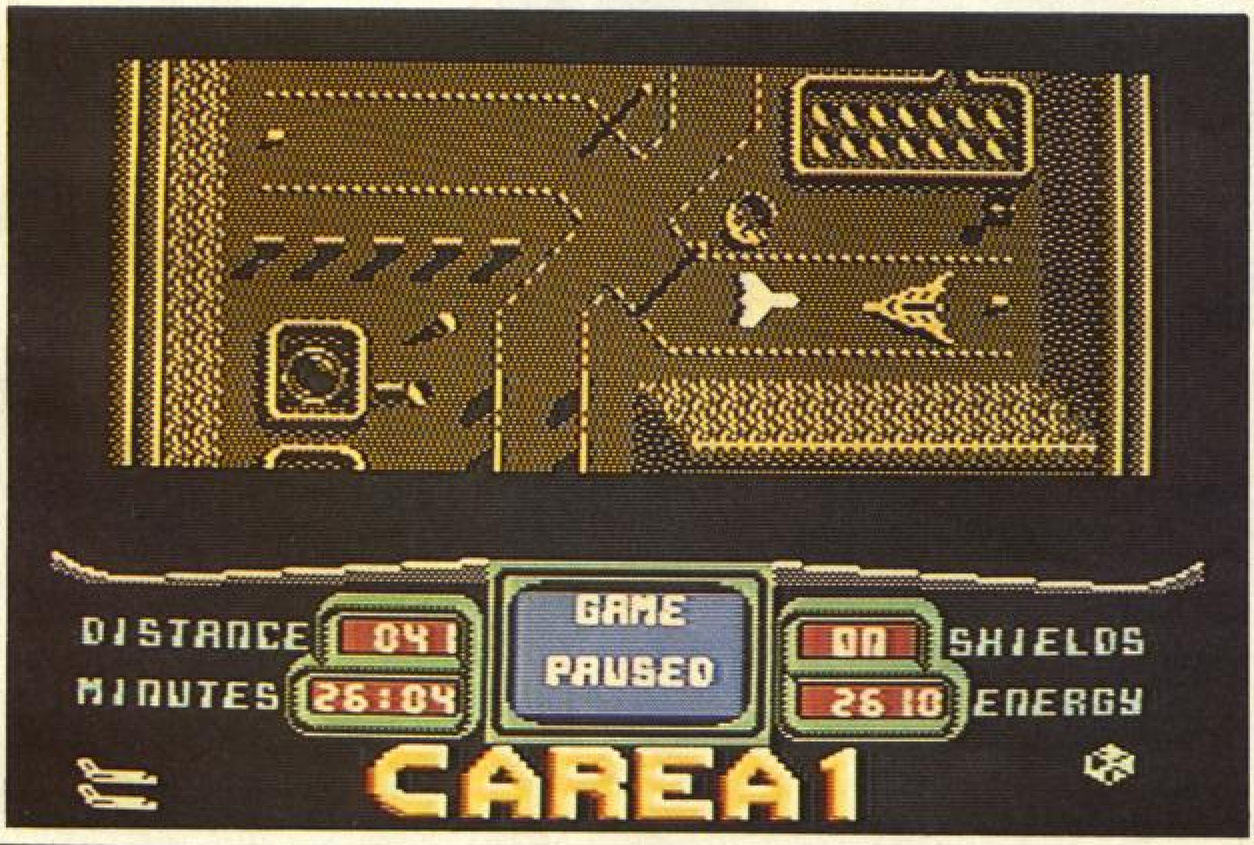


All the time that I was playing The Tube, I kept getting this feeling of 'what if . . . ?'. There are loads of good ideas within the game (and some great effects), but the main themes included are simple and derivative of other releases. The first section is more or less without purpose – you can easily finish it, and after one or two goes it provides nothing more than an inconvenience to be endured rather than played. Only the second two sections entertain to any degree, and even then the challenge is frustrated by the repetition of having to sit through the first section after each successful round. The Tube does offer a little challenge – but I'd advise you to have a good look before shelling out your nine quid.



► Negotiating the web-like tractor beam at the start of the Tube

► Catchment Area One – the space equivalent of the elephant's graveyard



PRESENTATION 79%
Adequate instruction and plenty of options.

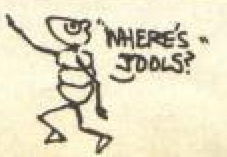
GRAPHICS 71%
Clever use of colour and neat effects, but the tacky sprites tend to mar the appearance.

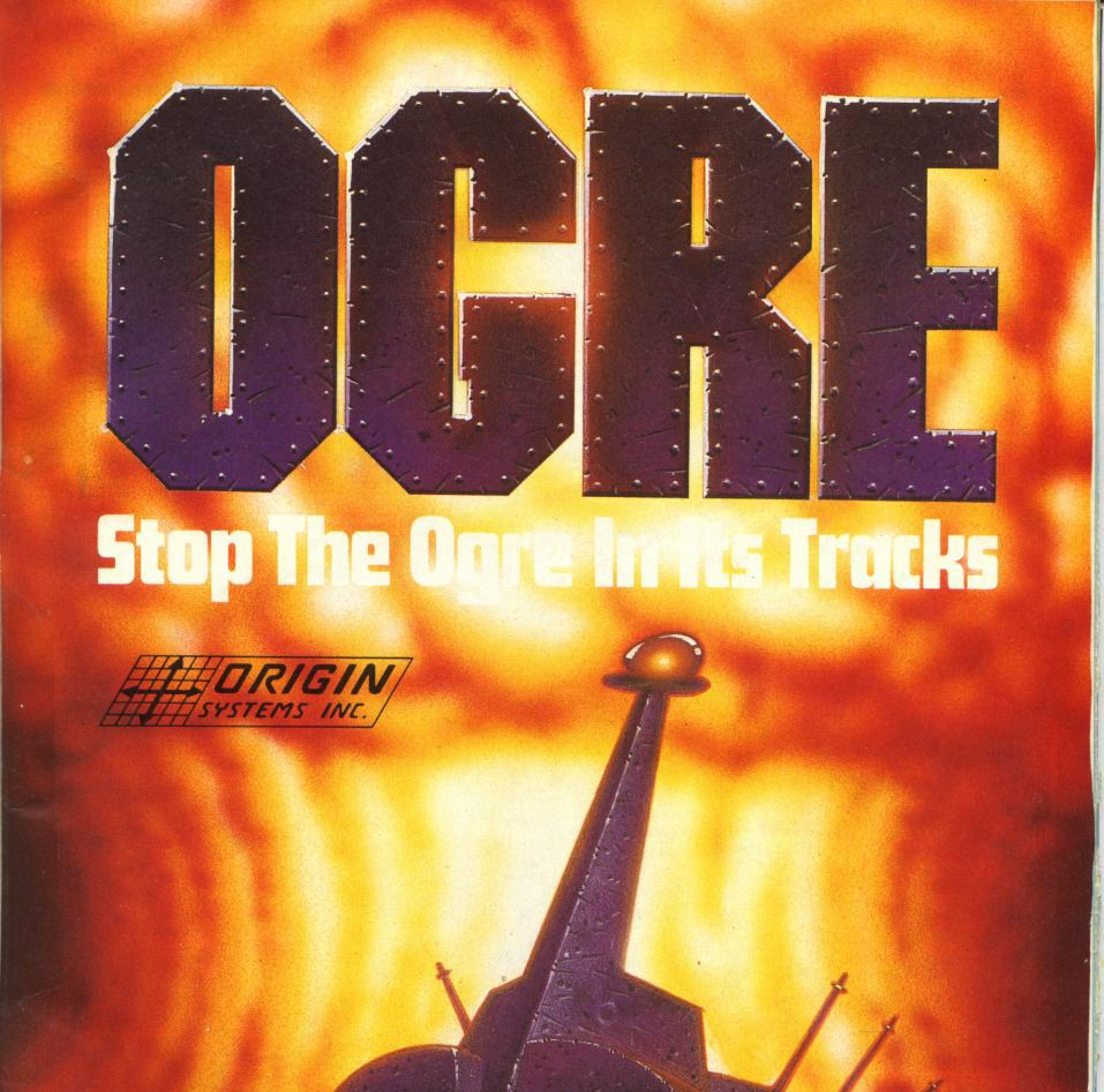
SOUND 62%
Poor effects and average music.

HOOKABILITY 53%
The first section is technically clever, but the rest of the levels are straightforward.

LASTABILITY 43%
Repetitive and limited in variety.

OVERALL 54%
An attempt at something different, which doesn't quite come off.




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BLACK MAGIC

US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

The kingdom of Marigold has been under the thumb of the evil Red Warlock Zahgrim for too long. Hideous demons roam the streets while good citizens cower in their homes, afraid to venture forth. Luckily there is a hero, an apprentice willing to take on the might of Zahgrim and banish him from Marigold – that hero is you. To achieve the task, the six magical eyes of the former good King Anakar must be found and replaced in a large stone statue buried deep in the caverns of Marigold. These eyes are scattered throughout Marigold, so the quest is an arduous one.

The adventure takes place over a large multi-directionally scrolling platform landscape. The hero starts the mission at the top left hand corner of the map and explores the surface and the huge underground complex to find the six eyes.

Throughout the quest, Zahgrim's minions, including demons, bats, ogres, ghosts, giant monsters and fire-spitting plants, attack at every opportunity. Contact with one of these (or their deadly spittle) reduce's the hero's health, represented by a diminishing bar.

All is not bad though, and extra food and arrows are picked up to increase chances of survival. Spells are also discovered and can be used to help in times of extreme duress. When the mission starts, the hero is ranked an apprentice and is only able to cast two types of spells – a minor teletransportation spell called blink, and vanish, a limited invisibility spell. However, as creatures are killed and objects and eyes picked up, experience points are gained. When 3000 experience points have been collected, the hero is ranked a wizard and is capable of freezing both water and any creatures which come in his path. Next is the rank of Sorcerer, capable of conjuring fire, extra health, food or arrows, and finally the ultimate status of Necromancer, where fear and bolts are added to the already stunning array of weapons. When this status is reached and all six eyes have been collected, the statue can be approached and Zahgrim finally defeated – but it's a tough task!



The old proverb, 'don't judge a book by its cover' holds very true here, as at first Black Magic **looks a right load of codswallop. The sprites are inept and the backdrops are nothing to write home about – it even sounds grotty, with nothing but crude effects to generate an atmosphere. But,** Black Magic **is extremely playable, and throws down a pleasureable and addictive challenge that should keep even the most adept of arcade adventurers amused and perplexed for some considerable time. Progressing through the RPG type status is a challenge, and collecting the six eyes really takes some doing. I've spent a lot of time playing this, and thoroughly enjoyed every moment – if you're a keen arcade adventurer, I think you will too.**



When playing this I was reminded of Capcom's Ghosts 'n' Goblins**, especially with the style of the backdrops. The gameplay is quite addictive, and the desire to find all six eyes is very strong indeed. There are plenty of hostile creatures to contend with, and sometimes the enemy are so numerous there aren't enough arrows to deal with them all!** Black Magic **is a fast little blast, and well worth casting your eye over for a spell.**

A huge swamp demon rises from the water



Trading with trolls tends to be a one-way affair!





Although Black Magic **looks like it was designed by a committee of chimps, the game itself actually play really well, falling half-way between an RPG and an arcade adventure. There's enough depth there to satisfy most would-be cave-dwellers, and as progress depends heavily on the items collected and the efficiency with which you despatch your foes, each game is sufficiently different every time it's played. If you're an arcade adventure hankering for some action, you can't really go wrong with** Black Magic**.**

PRESENTATION 71%
No title screen or options, but thoughtful in-game layout.

GRAPHICS 54%
Unimpressive and strictly functional backdrops and sprites.

SOUND 50%
Reasonable spot effects only.

HOOKABILITY 82%
Instantly rewarding exploration.

LASTABILITY 83%
Plenty to keep an avid player adventuring for some time.

OVERALL 77%
Although looking and sounding awful, this is a highly enjoyable and challenging arcade adventure.

ZZAP! TEST SIZZLER

RED L.E.D.

Starlight, £9.99 cass, £12.99 disk, joystick or keys

- A race against time across a fabulous series of scrolling 3-D worlds

Earth's resources are running out again, and the only way new power can be generated is by linking the vital cosmic interlace grid. This grid consists of 37 inter-connected coloured hexagons, each representing a world. The objective is to form a continuous line of hexagons from one side of the grid to the other – a task achieved by liberating all the worlds along that line. Three ZMX all-purpose battle robots and an hour of real-time are all that the player has to complete this world-saving task.

A world is captured by teleporting a battle-droid to the landscape in question, and guiding it around to find and collect all four energy pods. These small pyramidal objects activate the exit portal, allowing the landscape to be claimed and the droid transported to the next world.

Each world is filled with danger, including acid lakes, chasms, precipices and steep slopes leading to infinity. Should the droid fall from the landscape, one minute is removed from the total time allowed for the mission. To help find the way around the landscape, a map can be accessed from the keyboard showing the terrain immediately surrounding the remote droid.

Each of the three droids has different assets and capabilities. The first, 'fang', doesn't like the acid pools, but is immune to gravity and can hang on the sloping walls of the landscape without sliding down. The flat, round hover droid floats across the landscape on a cushion of anti-nothing. He is unaffected by the acid lakes, but has difficulty in coping with hills and valleys. Finally, there's the standard issue droid: he has the least fun of all, being adversely affected by both gravity and acid.

The landscape is infested with enemy robots which home in and attempt to crash into the active droid. Energy is lost each time a collision occurs, with lost power represented by a shrinking bar. Shooting an attacker, however, expands the bar once again.

Enemy robots are produced by generators which are dotted around the landscape. Blasting these ceases robot production from that unit and gives the droid a large energy boost. The only problem with this is that it angers the remaining robots, who attack with added vigour.

Acid lakes, rivers and acid falls are frozen by tripping a snowflake shaped ice-switch. This freezes the acidic liquid momentarily, allowing both the land droids to cross without sustaining any damage.

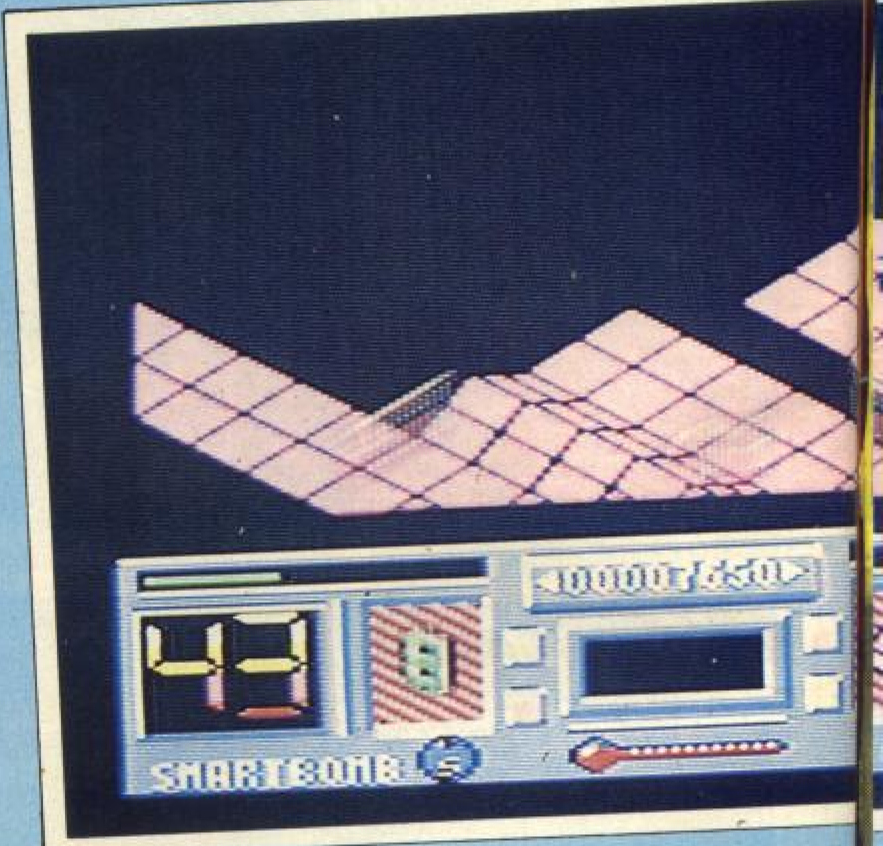
Other items found about the landscapes include teleport pads which enable the more arduous terrains to be negotiated successfully, and all-destroying smart bombs which are collected and activated when necessary. Time-distort capsules are occasionally encountered and either add or subtract five minutes to the timer, depending on the way they're spinning. Spinning letters which are collected to eventually spell BONUS and give access to the bonus screen. This screen takes place on the last world played, and the droid negotiates the landscape from the drop zone to the exit portal within the allotted time. There are no enemy robots around and the exit is open, so it is merely a matter of dexterity and speed.

Points are scored for completing a landscape, shooting the enemy droids and collecting objects. Each time 100,000 points are gained, an extra droid is awarded.

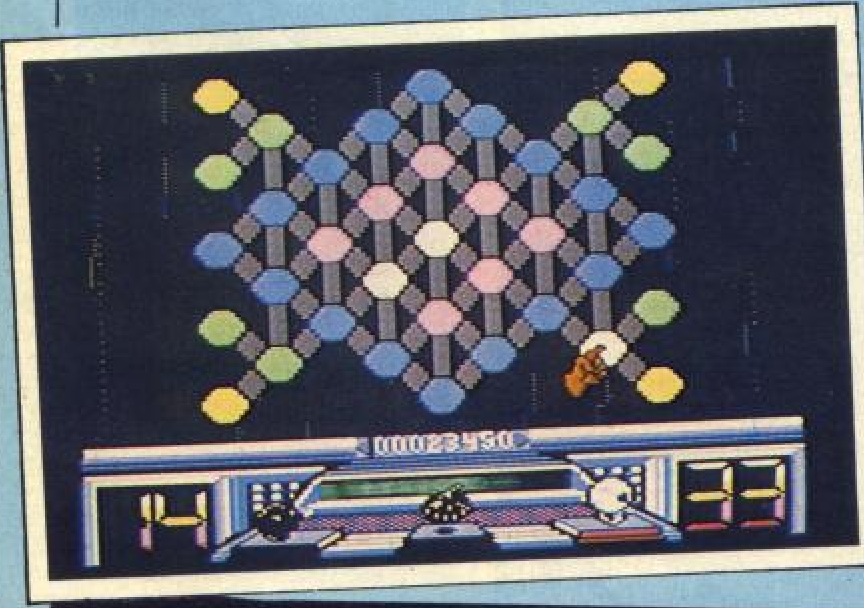
Once a world is finished with, the droid returns to base, and the interlace grid appears once more. Liberated landscapes appear as glowing hexagons, while lands which proved fatal turn white. Once a hexagon has changed colour it may not be attempted again, and so the choice of pathway to take is important. Choose wisely, think straight and get that line.



► Having emerged from a teleport pad, the basic droid whizzes across a frozen acid lake to collect his first energy pod



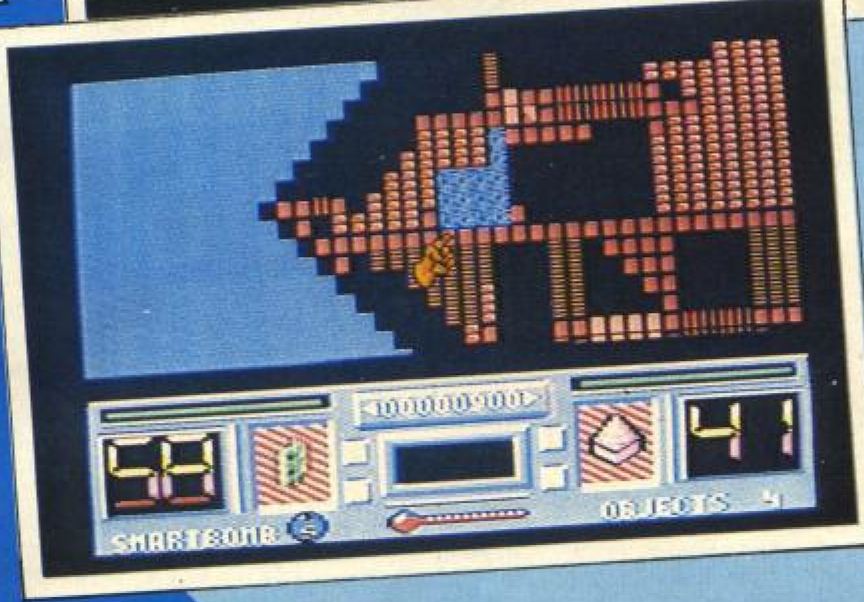
► The first interlace grid, showing the 37 battlegrounds available to your droids



The inertial control is very difficult to get to grips with, and successfully moving around the anti-droid terrain takes some perseverance. The acid baths, waterfalls and sheer drops are also tricky hazards to to contend with, and if that isn't enough you've also got other droids to avoid, objects to collect and alien generators to zap! The action is constantly furious, and I felt pretty whacked after I finally managed to clear a level – even so I wanted to go straight back for more. Red L.E.D. is speedy, smooth, slick, colourful and compelling – and provides the perfect balance between manual and mental dexterity. If Starlight can keep up this standard, they should be selling games for a long time to come.







▲ The exit portal – a trans-dimensional chasm to freedom

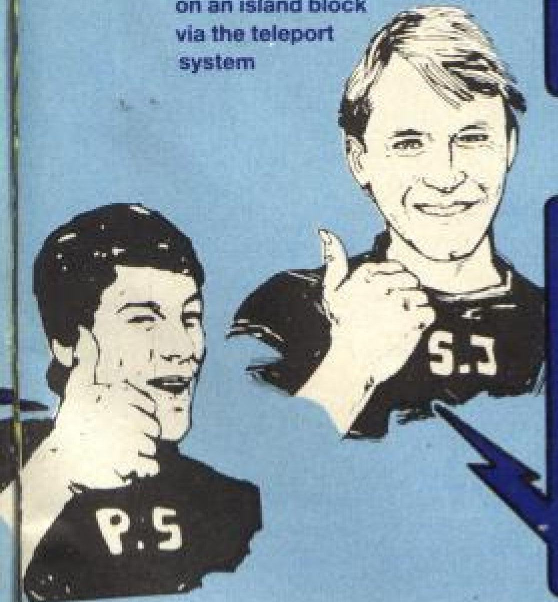
► A map of each battleground is supplied for those with no sense of direction



► The hover-droid appears on an island block via the teleport system



After a none-too-impressive start with Deathscape, Greyfell and Dogfight 2187, Starlight has finally hit the big time – and how! Red L.E.D. can only be described as brilliant. Imagine a multi-directionally scrolling Spindizzy with more depth and playability, and you're still only part of the way to visualising Red L.E.D.. The landscapes are superbly designed and have a totally convincing feel as the droids move over them. The inertial control method is fantastic, especially when a droid slides down a hill or skates across the ice. What I particularly like is that you can tackle the game in several ways – either go for a high score, battle through as many landscapes as possible, or complete the challenge proper. There are five enormous levels of highly addictive play to battle through, giving plenty of long-term challenge. Go out and get this game – it's something really special.



I thought I'd seen the ultimate in geometric 3-D låndscapes with Spindizzy, The Sentinel and, to a lesser extent, Marble Madness. Apparently not . . . Red L.E.D. has ideas to the contrary, containing some of the most realistic and imaginative dioramas I've ever seen on a home computer. The movement of the droids is great, with just the right amount of difficulty so that each landscape starts off as a challenge – and remains a challenge on successive plays. The game itself is huge. There are loads and loads of screens and they're all very devious and cleverly constructed. Although seeming derivative of other games, Red L.E.D. is in fact unique in its approach and brilliant in its design. It took them four attempts, but Starlight have finally found their star bright.

PRESENTATION 90%
Logical and well designed game structure, plus the inclusion of a high score table, pause mode and map mode.

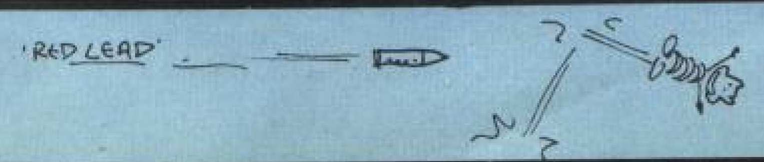
GRAPHICS 93%
Superlative backdrops with smooth scrolling and effective movement throughout.

SOUND 72%
Limited, but atmospheric sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 84%
The comfortable control method makes the action quite easy to get into, and there's a wide choice of landscapes to explore from the start.

LASTABILITY 92%
Finishing one grid is a rewarding challenge – finishing the whole game is a real achievement.

OVERALL 93%
A truly impressive product, brilliantly designed, implemented and executed.



PROHIBITION

Infogrames, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

The place – Chicago. The era – the late 1920's. Prohibition has been in force for several years now, allowing the more enterprising of criminals to build up business empires based on the illicit trafficking of alcoholic liquor.

In an attempt to retain their slice of the market, rival gangs indulge in bloody wars of attrition – murder becomes a household word, and fear riddles the streets of the windy city.

Unable to adequately police the city, Mercenaries like yourself have been called in to help control the ascending crime wave in the only way you know how . . . termination with extreme prejudice.



Variety is sadly lacking from this latest trans-channel offering. The game itself is neatly implemented and contains some very noteworthy graphics, but unfortunately it falls well short in the entertainment stakes. Once you get the hang of the shaking gunsight, there's simply nothing left to offer any challenge. Having played for what seemed like ages, I'd obtained a score of over $5,000 with five lives left and little possibility of being shot. I could have at least doubled this – very dull! For me, Prohibition **quickly lost its attraction.**



I thought that I was really going to like this one. The promise of packing a tommy-gun and indiscriminately eliminating hoodlums sounded like it could provide a great deal of fun. However, the finished product wasn't really all that I expected it to be. The action is simply too repetitive to be really compulsive, and the superb graphics and presentation don't make up for the irritation caused by the awkward control method. I appreciate that the juddering gunsight is supposed to simulate the uncontrollable nature of a 1920's machine gun, but it is too hard to handle, and makes aiming a matter of luck rather than skill. Essentially, Prohibition **is an extremely polished product which would have benefited greatly from having some more time spent on the gameplay.**

Positioning yourself in one of the seedier parts of town, your brief is to kill all the hired gunmen as they appear from their hiding places across the street. Armed with the ubiquitous Thompson sub machine-gun, you line up the gun's cross hairs over your intended victim and press the fire button to send a hail of lead in his general direction.

The block opposite contains many buildings, only small sections of which are immediately visible surrounding your gunsight. Moving the gunsight causes the block to scroll past – vertically and horizontally – enabling the whole street to be viewed.

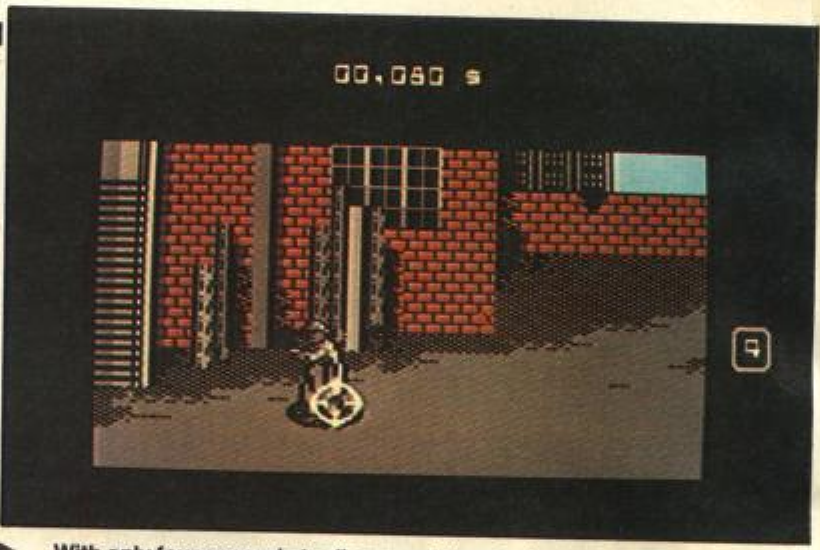
Gangsters appear at openings, windows, doors and the roof of the block and on the sidewalk. If they come out of hiding in a part of the block not within your local field of view, a small arrow appears at the bottom of the screen pointing in their general direction.

As soon as one gangster is despatched, five seconds are allotted in which to find and shoot the next, the time shown numerically at the side of the screen. Failing to kill your opponent in time is rewarded with a hail of returning fire which, unless dodged, proves fatal.

Dodging bullets is achieved by pressing any key, whereupon the screen then turns grey and the offending bullets go whizzing past. Releasing the key resumes the countdown timer, giving you another chance to pinpoint the opposition.

Avoiding shots in this way may be carried out many times, but a second meter displays the total amount of 'dodge' time remaining. Should this run out, you have to resort to your speed and skill as a marksman to continue the mission.

On receiving three separate bullet wounds, the pain becomes too much for you to continue and safe in the knowledge of a job well done, you expire quietly.

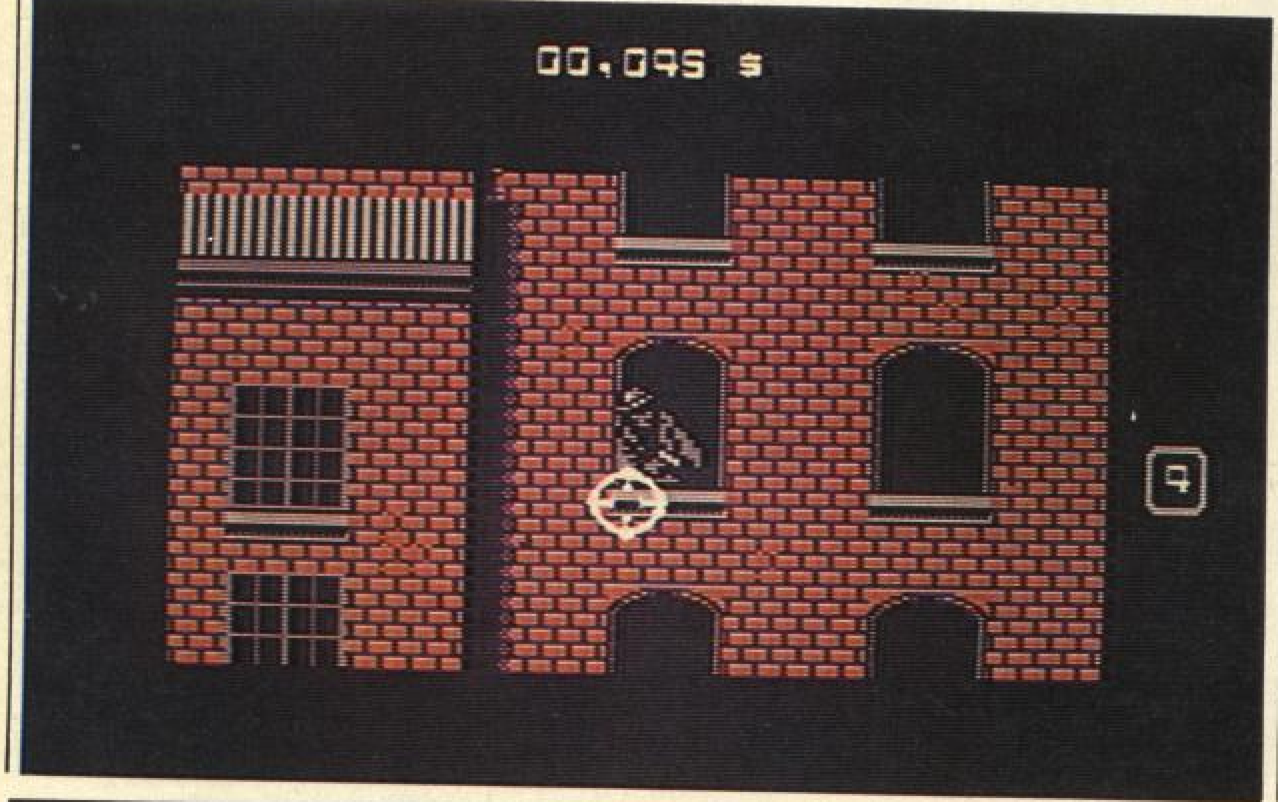


▶ **With only four seconds to dispose of the criminal it's going to be pretty tight**



Once the wobbling gunsight has been mastered, scanning the buildings and shooting down gangsters becomes a breeze. After I'd got to grips with the tricky control method I waited for something exciting to happen. It didn't, and I became increasingly bored when man after man was despatched. The novelty of shooting down the gangsters wears off surprisingly quickly, and when this happens there's very little excitement to be gleaned. The lack of variety proves to be a millstone around Prohibition**'s neck, and at ten pounds I'd expect a little more fun for my money. Play the arcade game** City 1931 **a couple of times, and spend the balance elsewhere.**

▶ **Even Chicago's manholes conceal trigger happy hoodlums**



PRESENTATION 40%
Minimal documentation and a total lack of options.

GRAPHICS 82%
Detailed and varied characters set against colourful and impressive backdrops.

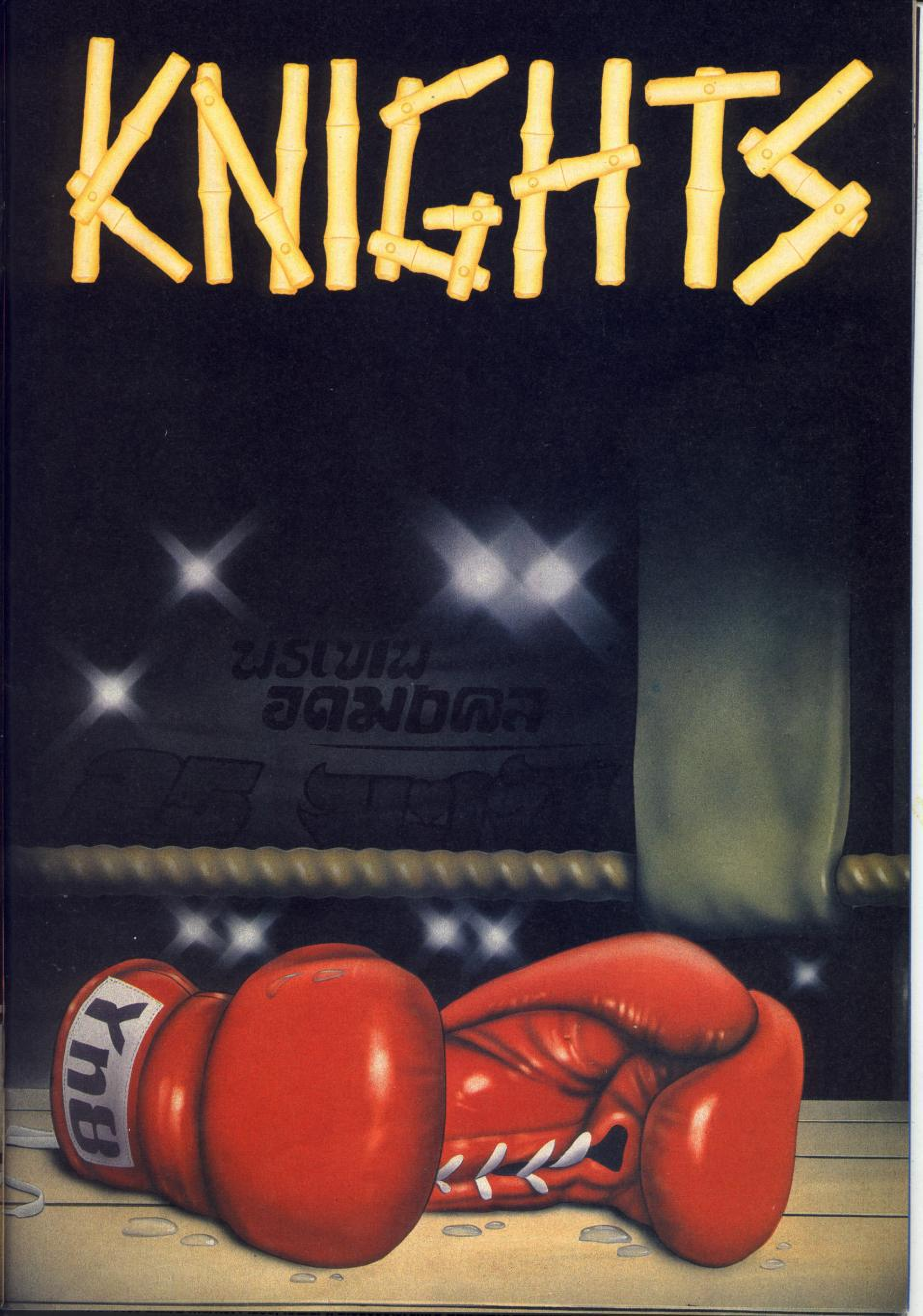
SOUND 60%
A slightly irritating tune plays along as the carnage ensues – good gunshots though.

HOOKABILITY 67%
The first few plays are entertaining enough.

LASTABILITY 29%
The repetitive gameplay and lack of variety quickly kills the enjoyment.

OVERALL 49%
An interesting idea, let down by poor game design and lack of variety.


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CENTURIONS

Reaktor, £9.99 cass, £12.99 disk, joystick only

Saturday morning TV fans will no doubt recognise the heroes of Reaktor's latest offering, *Centurions*. Ace McCloud, Jake Rockwell and Max Ray are all here, ready to battle the forces of Doc Terror as he attempts to infiltrate the Weapons Development Centre and make off with the World's largest supply of Tyron Dichromate – a chemical used to catalyse the process of Nuclear fusion. Armed with their customised exo-frames, Jake and his team enter the maze-like confines of the complex and begin blasting!

The action is displayed *Gauntlet* style, with the Weapons Centre appearing as a large three-level multi-directionally scrolling maze.

A SCOUT droid appears at the start of the mission, transforming into Ace, Jake or Max by walking over the pads marked Land, Sea and Air (in two-player mode, the second droid appears automatically when the fire button is pressed).

The complex is inhabited by Doc Terror's massed hordes, which are destroyed by blasting. Energy is lost if a hostile touches a hero, with this loss depicted as a diminishing number.

A glowing 'Quant' appears when enough aliens have been despatched, and is picked up to allow our heroes to choose a new weapon. These weapons are represented at the bottom of the screen by the letters A to I, highlighted in rapid succession. Pressing the fire button when the desired selection is lit adds that weapon to the character's exo-frame. Gathering the first system, 'A', provides a random weapon plus extra energy to top up reserves. The weapons have different destructive capabilities, but they all only last for a limited amount of time.

Progress is made from level to level by finding six segments of a master key and using them to unlock the relevant passage. However, smaller keys must be found to open the doors that separate different parts of the labyrinthine complex. Each of the locks is represented by a shape – square, triangular, circular and so on. The corresponding keys are to be found on a plinth surrounded by air, land or sea. Only the Centurion with the correct ability can cross the elemental 'moat', and therefore you have to change from one character to another in order to retrieve all the keys.

If at any time a character is hit by the face of Doc Terror he is beamed back to headquarters and once again reverts to SCOUT droid form.



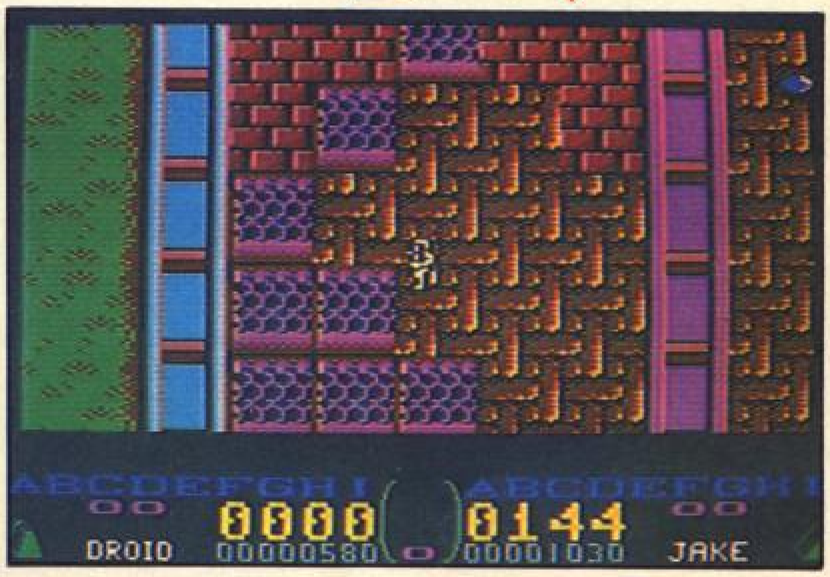
I must confess to watching Centurions, usually when I'm suffering from the 'nothing else to do on a Saturday morning but sit in bed and watch Get Fresh' syndrome. Therefore I feel qualified to say that this officially licensed game bears only a passing resemblance to the cartoon series, lacking most of its action and excitement. The first level is pretty straightforward, but there's so much to-ing and fro-ing on the two subsequent levels that it becomes frustrating – especially as the sprites move so slowly. A 'save game' option would also have been nice as the game takes hours to complete – and having to sit down for such a length of time is just too much. It's a shame that this is so, because with a little more thought, Centurions could have been quite neat.



After spending an extremely long time playing Centurions, I never really felt that I had gained any real proficiency at it. The main problem was the inlay, which can hardly be described as infomative. It tells you half of the game's aims, and assumes that you can get past the first few problems without any guidance. Once you've got over this first hurdle, you suddenly find that the gameplay is really very thin. In fact most of your time is spent travelling repeatedly (especially in a one-player game) over a dreary and drab landscape looking for one elusive door – not very exhilarating. The most exciting part of the game seems to be the choosing of weapons after picking up a 'Quant', and even this is far too simplistic to present any kind of long-term interest.



I love the opening sequence, but the game itself fails to inspire me to a similar degree. The gameplay simply revolves around the negotiation of huge mazes, blasting the enemy as you go. The only hurdle is the disappearing energy, but this is no longer a problem once you get the hang of selecting the correct energy replenishing module. Thereafter, there is nothing to stop you from completing the game, except for the fact that the whole complex is fairly large and the mazes are extremely devious. You find yourself trooping back and forth over the same ground time and time again, changing character and swapping keys. If you're a mapping freak you'll have a field day. If not – look elsewhere.



► **Jake Rockwell, in the process of destroying cases of Tyron dichromate**



► **Part of the Weapons Centre that the Centurions must protect from the armies of Doc Terror**

PRESENTATION 79%
Brilliant opening sequence and good documentation, slightly marred by the lack of a game save option.

GRAPHICS 62%
Good use of colour on the backdrops, but the animation is poor and the sprites have little connection to their celluloid counterparts.

SOUND 77%
A stirring Ben Daglish soundtrack – unfortunately accompanied by effects which are no more than adequate.

HOOKABILITY 60%
Zapping Doc Terror's cronies is simplicity itself.

LASTABILITY 43%
The compulsion to wade through all three levels soon disappears when the enormity of the task ahead becomes apparent.

OVERALL 53%
An initially entertaining arcade adventure which soon becomes tiresome.

ZZAP! TEST SIZZLER

MEGA-APOCALYPSE

Martech, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

● **Martech's visually and aurally stunning follow-up to** Crazy Comets.



▲ Collecting extra equipment at the start of Mega-Apocalypse

Space, the final frontier. These are the voyages of a complete maniac hell-bent on the destruction of large sections of the Universe. Your mission is simple – to boldly go on a five year mission to seek out strange new worlds and civilizations . . . and blow them to smithereens.

One or two players can partake in this world-shattering action, with both piloting a moderately equipped delta-winged ship. At the start of an attack wave extra equipment, including missiles, extra speed, rotate motors, shields and (thankfully) extra lives are picked up and automatically added to the ship. Care must be taken, however, as small comets frequently inhabit this mass of useful debris and collision with such a heavenly body is fatal.

Suitably swathed in death-dealing weaponry, the mission proper begins. Moons and planets come whizzing out of the swirling star-field straight towards the ship. The on-board lasers can deal instant death to a smaller item, but let a moon hang around too long and it transforms in size, from moon to Mega Callisto and then to Mega Krypton, which is far more difficult to destroy. After many laser hits, these large bodies start to glow and go into a frenzy, zooming around the screen at a horrendous rate of knots, all the time homing in on your ship. If missiles have been collected, they automatically fire upon the moon when it reaches the height of its activity, blowing it up. If not, only some extremely fancy flying keeps your ship in one piece.

As you progress through the rounds, completing a level is occasionally rewarded by a visit from a Mega Xothopian – a colossal planet intent on your demise. These are dealt with in a similar fashion to Mega Kryptons, but take more hits to destroy and are even more agitated in their orbits.

Mega-Apocalypse supports one and two player modes, whereby both ships appear on screen at the same time, with both



▲ In one player mode, all those goodies are yours for the taking





Simon Nichol has done a marvellous job in updating Crazy Comets, **adding extra features and playability where it scarcely seemed possible. The music and speech are especially notable, adding an extra dimension to the excitement already offered by the graphics and gameplay – stirring stuff indeed. This has to be one of the most frantically paced games I've ever played – even the addition of a second player on screen does little to ease the task of planet destruction.** Mega-Apocalypse **is one of the few games which had me actually practising and striving to get better . . . there can hardly be a higher recommendation than that.**



According to the dictionary, an apocalypse is a prophetic revelation. Well the arrival of Simon Nichol's game has been prophesised for some months now, and playing the game is certainly an enlightening experience! Mega-Apocalypse **is a real high-energy shoot 'em up, boasting some of the most rapid and chaotic action to be seen on a 64 for some time. Mr Nichol has done a marvellous job, and the game's technical achievements are so well implemented that you almost take them for granted. The spinning star-field is superb, and a joy to watch in the 'insomniac's star mode'. The music, speech and sound effects also play a large part, especially the latter two, which are nothing short of excellent, and really add to the atmosphere. If there are any owners of** Crazy Comets **wondering if it's worth buying** Mega-Apocalypse**, don't worry – it's in a class of its own and has more than enough innovations to justify its purchase.**



Get ready to freak out, and take on some rather crazy heavenly bodies! Mega-Apocalypse **is one of the fastest and most colourful shoot 'em ups around. Simon Nichol has taken the basic idea of** Crazy Comets **and improved the gameplay, graphics and sound immensely. The new aspects of gameplay include features which are collected and added on to the ship at the start of a wave, including the ability to rotate, homing missiles and a speed-up feature. There's also a simultaneous two-player mode and a new giant mega-comet which bangs about the screen at an amazing speed. The spinning star-field that forms the backdrop is absolutely stunning, and the animation on the planets is great. The sampled sound effects and speech are incredibly clear, and don't interfere in any way with the excellent Rob Hubbard soundtrack.** Mega-Apocalypse **is a shoot 'em up** par excellence **– watch out for it.**

scores being kept separately for addition to the extensive high-score table at the end of the game.

If all the intensive joystick waggling becomes too much, you can always relax in front of the 'star mode' which shows off the spinning star-field to the best of its capabilities.

PRESENTATION 93%
Good options with one and two player modes and a superlative high-score table.

GRAPHICS 92%
Stunning star-field with lovely spinning planets and great spaceships.

SOUND 96%
Superb Hubbard soundtrack and the sampled speech and sound effects are an inspired addition.

HOOKABILITY 84%
The first few missions probably won't last that long, but the urge to continue is strong.

LASTABILITY 89%
The game throws down a challenge which is too strong to ignore.

OVERALL 90%
One of the better shoot 'em ups this year – and one of the most polished programs ever.

PIRATES OF THE BARBARY COAST

Cascade, £9.95 disk, joystick or keys

Set in and around the South Mediterranean, Cascade's budget disk release *Pirates of the Barbary Coast* takes you on a voyage of danger and excitement as you attempt to rescue your beloved daughter, Katherine.

While docked at Casablanca, the ferocious pirate Captain Bloodthroat ransacked your ship and kidnapped the young lady in question. The evil buccaneer is now holding her for ransom on an island off the West coast of Africa. You must either raise the cash, in the form of 50,000 pieces of gold, or venture forth to the blackguard's hideout, and face him in nautical combat!

You begin your voyage from the port of Casablanca, with a map appearing to show the available destinations along the Barbary Coast of North Africa.

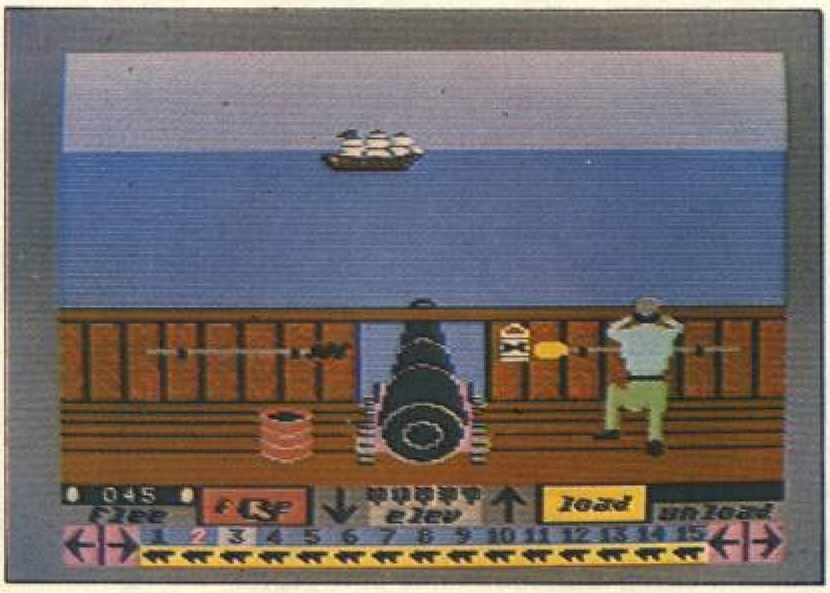
To raise the necessary bullion, you have to trade commodities between ports. These can include wool, silk and rum – almost anything really, as long as there's a profit in it. To hedge your bets, inside information can be obtained from unscrupulous storekeepers – for a price.



Obviously there are comparisons here to the equivalent Microprose offering, and in fact, the basis of both games is very similar, with trading and battles being the main features of the gameplay. Pirates! **does have a lot more depth, but of course it costs twice as much to buy. The graphics of Cascade's release are of a fairly basic standard and the gameplay is also repetitive, but actually destroying other vessels is quite good fun, especially when they cruise past on fire!** Pirates of the Barbary Coast **isn't anything special though, and should really have been even cheaper to justify its 'budget' label.**

While sailing from port to port, pirates who may want to indulge in a little high-speed cannonball swapping are encountered. You may either flee the battle or stand and fight. Firing your cannons is carried out in a realistic fashion:

► **Having to face your complement of 15 cannon, your opponent doesn't stand much of a chance**







After the rather disappointing *Pirates*, I had high hopes for this release – unfortunately I was let down again. The graphics and trading aspects are very simplistic, and become repetitious after a couple of sessions. That's not the worse thing, though – the gameplay is also incredibly slow. Having to load the cannons one after the other is amazingly laborious, and there's no real 'action' otherwise. That, coupled with the long disk accesses means it isn't long before the game gets incredibly tiresome.

they must be loaded with powder and a cannonball, tamped down and brushed out.

The enemy ship sails slowly past your row of 15 cannons, which are fired individually. Achieving a direct hit depends upon the elevation of the barrel, which becomes a matter of trial and error: a message bar tells you if your shot was long or short, allowing you to alter the elevation accordingly. Achieving a direct hit causes the opposing ship to burst into flames, and when enough damage is sustained, the enemy ship flounders. At this point you may board the vessel and take either the ship's log for information, or its booty to swell your coffers.

Keeping your ship and crew in good condition also plays an important part in your mission, which concludes only when you have rescued your daughter, or gone to Davey Jones' locker in the attempt.

DISK ONLY

PRESENTATION 71%
Pleasant introduction, but the slow-moving cursor is a bind – especially during the battle sequence.

GRAPHICS 52%
The graphics generate little atmosphere, and on occasion are quite poorly executed.

SOUND 23%
A weak opening tune plus one or two decent effects.

HOOKABILITY 67%
The distinct lack of action is not helped by the off-putting cursor control.

LASTABILITY 48%
Those who persevere should rapidly see a conclusion to the mission, and the occasional player will find little to stir the imagination.

OVERALL 57%
A noble attempt at a budget disk game, unfortunately let down by the lack of depth and variety.



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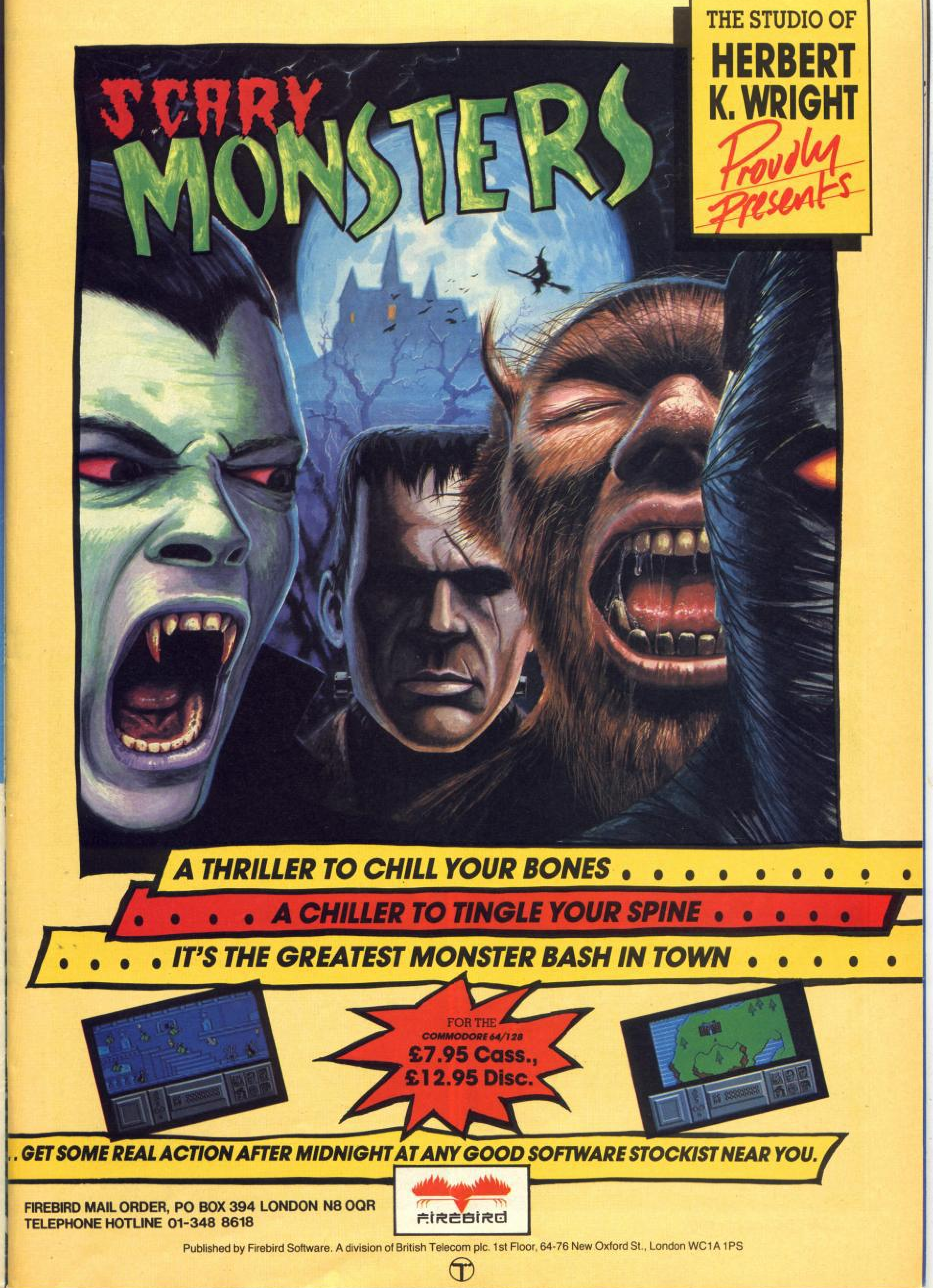
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ZZAP! RRAP

It's a funny old life, isn't it? This very day, several of the local school kids who help out with CRASH reviews (they can't afford professionals like ZZAP!) have had their exam results after a taxing few weeks wait in dread of the outcome. I remember it well. Like them, I also had good ideas of what I'd be when I grew up (fortunately that hasn't happened yet), and it wasn't a a train driver or a fireman either. No, Lloyd Mangram was going to be a surgeon, yet here I am – an answerer of letters. You don't become a Knight of the British Empire for answering people's letters, and while that's a disappointment to me, I'm sure I'm much happier as I am, than what I might have been if my 'A' level Zoology result had been better. The moral – no matter what you decide to do, life will teach you better, and that's no bad thing.

Enough moralising. I'm paid by the letter answered, so here goes, starting with Letter of the Month which goes to . . .

MONEY MONEY MONEY

Dear Lloyd,
I have decided to get a few things off my chest. I read Gary Penn's Editorial (issue 27 July 1987) and a smile came to my face. Could it be possible, original games for a mere £5.95. No, Elite would go out of business! I mean if games were to be sold for six quid, no tie-ins or licences – just pure originality – it would be sheer heaven. Because I am a mere 13, I don't have the ability (cash) to fork out a tenner every time I feel like it, so I copy games. I know this is wrong, but isn't selling a poor game with a fancy box also wrong? Okay, there are many good games, but compared to the amount of trash on the market, the population is small.

Something seriously wrong is going on. For example, you gave Killed Until Dead 83% for a £15 disk-based price-tag, but £15 to you is totally different to me. You have claimed before that you know what it is like to buy games, but how long ago was that, and how old were you, but, most importantly what was your income? I get £3.00 pocket money a week plus extra for various jobs about the home. That comes to £6 a week at the most. I also have many debts to older brothers (I value my limbs, you know). I could buy a MAD game once a week, but there aren't many around and even less good ones, so I don't bother. Anyway, I am getting bored of my 64 sitting in the corner of my room.

I am going to take this opportunity to ask various computer firms to stop wasting time on tie-ins let's have originality and enjoyment! I want to come back to a game more than once. Use the 64's capabilities and do not abuse our brains!

I rest my case here, and I hope you agree with me.

Simon Calvert, Herts

Well Simon, as most of us here in ZZAP! possess home computers other than the C64, we DO realise what it means to buy software regularly. However, a game should not be given a lower percentage mark simply because it costs more than some people can afford – as long as there's sufficient gameplay to warrant the price tag, then the game will be judged on its merits. Maybe Software Projects' new mid-price will be the answer to your problems, especially if they can continue to release games as good as Star Paws. By the way, I really think you should tell your parents about your brothers psychotic debt-collecting methods . . . do they really break your limbs?

Thanks for your letter, Simon, and hang onto your hat while you wait for your software prize to arrive.

LM

CONSOLING THOUGHTS

Dear Lloyd,
With the appearance of the new dedicated arcade game machines like the Sega and Nintendo it looks like the end of the Home Computer, as most people use their home computers just for games. Things would therefore seem to have come full circle since the Atari game machines were on the market.

On second thoughts though, home computer users will sorely miss adventure games, music programs and POKES which wouldn't be possible on an arcade machine and so perhaps the way forward is with the Atari ST and the Amiga, two machines which I think will be the Spectrum and Commodore of the future. These computers have equally good sound and graphics capabilities as the arcade machines, but can also be used for adventure and music programs and be used as word processors. Prices are already dropping and hopefully they will be as affordable as their predecessor.

Daniel Hickman, Derby

PS – Are there any plans to do a feature on the Amiga and ST?

It comes down to the old argument – what do you want to use your machine for. Arcade games players are catered for extremely well with the consoles, whereas the more expensive computers are far more flexible. By the way – you can't POKE an Amiga or ST game!

LM

THE CASE FOR CARTRIDGES

Dear Lloyd,
Having read the review of *Defender of the Crown*, in your last issue, a thought sprang to mind. There must be thousands of C2N'ers who can't afford a disk drive, drooling over such games (myself included) and wishing they could play a piece of software as good as this – instead of going without or putting up with long winding multi-loads.

Yes, I know you've heard it all before, but why not release games such as *The Pawn*, *Gunship* and *Defender of the Crown* on cartridge. As we know, these exceptional pieces of software only appear every two to three months, and tape users would be willing to pay about £20 for a cartridge (I would and I'm unemployed).

I don't mean that every £15 cassette should be put onto a cartridge. Software Houses should take note of the review given by a magazine such as ZZAP!, and the sales of 'the disk version' and then decide whether or not to release a cartridge. This way the game would be sure to sell, and software houses would be certain of making a profit.

If you think about what I've said you'll see it makes a lot of sense. It means that both the software house and the purchaser get a good deal which after all is what trade is all about. Anyway, keep up the good work at ZZAP!

Graham Butler, Inverlocky

A technically-minded friend of mine tells me that there's not enough room in a cartridge for most of the games you mentioned, unless you add complicated extra hardware to select multiple 'banks' of memory. A single cartridge will hold 64K of code, but that doesn't leave any room for the current screen display and other vital elements which change during play. In practice most cartridges only use 16K of code, and even then they cost much more to produce than a disk. Defender of the Crown needs about 300K – and a 300K cartridge, with switching circuits, would cost about as much as a disk drive . . . c'est la vie!

LM

ZZAP! BACK?

Dear Lloyd,
Are we getting back to the old, much preferred type of ZZAP! with more consistent Gold Medals and Sizzlers? Thankfully, I think we are! Mind you it took its time didn't it. Better late than never though.

What happened to RE in No 28, I thought he would be celebrating with you the GM. He hasn't run off because of the Zzaptionnaire results has he?

Also is SJ just a temporary reviewer or what? I bet he's taken a year off before starting a career. Just think of the opportunities with a degree in Chemistry, and the *salaries!* I've got nothing against him, in fact I find his opinions and comments agree most of the time with mine. But I can't find the logic in working your metatarsals off getting a degree and then . . . becoming a games reviewer (unless like I said he's only temporary for 6 or 12 months). Could you explain in no uncertain terms please.

Martin Windsor, Birmingham

It's not really true to say that we're going back to an 'old style' ZZAP! by the inclusion of more Sizzlers and Gold Medals. That's more of a reflection of the current state of the software industry which appears to be lifting itself out of a recent bad patch. ZZAP!'s ratings will always depend on the quality of the software under review – and not on some trend or whim.

With regards to Richard Eddy, he's not run off because of the questionnaire results, it's just that he's needed in CRASH nowadays and rarely gets a chance to play with a Commodore (poor boy!).

Finally, Steve's reasons for reviewing computer games are many and varied. First and foremost, he's an ardent games player and prefers waggling a joystick to resin research. Also, contrary to popular belief, the chemicals industry doesn't really pay very well – and finally, he was made redundant from his last job!

LM

QUESTION TIME

Dear Lloyd,
I have numbered my questions, so that you can give one of your excellent replies to each. However, before I start off I'd like to apologise to 'ozzie' for me calling him ugly.

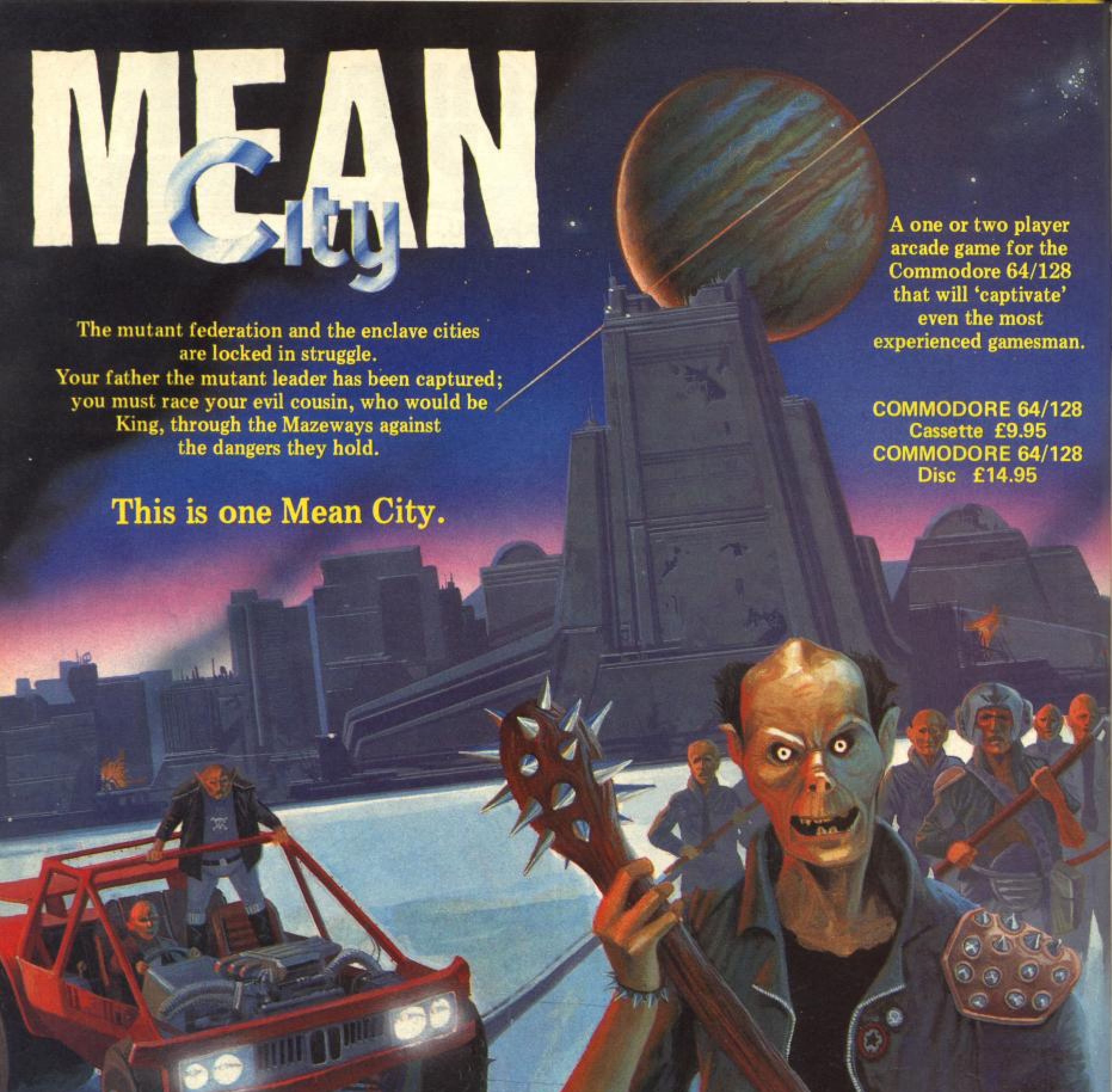
1. Why not include advertisements on your next demo tape. They would be interesting, well received and you would not have to knock the price up again. It would pay for itself.
2. Is it true that music master Rob Hubbard has tired of the Commodore 64 and has moved on to other, better paying jobs for the two 16-bit computers? I hope not, as his work is excellent and would be dearly missed.
3. How old are you? I think you are in your 30's. Have I insulted you?
4. Why are all the letters in your pages so serious? Don't you print funny entries or don't you get sent any. To liven things up here is a joke – Why did the Koala bear fall out of the eucalyptus tree? It was dead. Funny eh?
5. I hope you're never going to touch the C16 and +4 again, even with a barge pole. I would like to see Amiga coverage though.
6. Why don't you have any mail order adverts. People who only buy ZZAP! might be missing out on cheap prices for all the latest games. In your reviews why don't you include the cheapest price available and where you can buy it from.
7. Why not have a regular article stating the very cheap and free articles eg Zork I, II, III at £1.99 each from Logic Sales, the free software clubs you can join and the free modems you can get. There are plenty of them about.
8. Please tell me where I can get Public Domain software from and if it is free.
9. How many people on average enter your competitions. What are the odds against any one person winning a competition if he enters all of them, every month.
10. I think it would be a good idea to include a difficulty rating in the reviews. Being too hard or too easy can spoil a game. Experienced players would buy the hard ones and beginners would only buy easy ones.

Finally if 'Mark' from London is reading, please write, you know my address.

Phill Davies, Mid Glamorgan

1. *Watch this space.*
2. *We know that Rob has done some work on the Atari ST, but as for his future plans, well, he's gone to America where the money's better. Will he ever return . . . ?*
3. *No.*
4. *Not if you're the Koala bear!*
5. *We probably won't touch the C16 again, but the Amiga?*
6. *This issue sees the start of the new improved ZZAP! mail order service (see page 108). The reason that we don't include the cheapest prices is simple . . . we don't know them! Therefore we simply publish the recommended retail price – a far better idea!*
7. *We'll think about it.*
8. *We are not at liberty to say.*
9. *About 500 – 497,589 to 1.*
10. *This is not a question.*

LM


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ZZAP! RRAP

POINTS OF VIEW

Dear Lloyd,
Some points concerning your mag . . .

1. Why is everyone so cynical about the state of software today? Every time I get your magazine I can guarantee a letter will be there moaning about tie-ins and conversions. These people get on my nerves. I know there's a lot of bad games coming out, but so what! There's enough good games – *Head Over Heels*, *Wizball*, *Last Ninja* and *Thing Bounces Back* to name but four. There's always been rubbishy software and there always will be. I expect bad games, especially now as many good ideas have been used up and it's difficult to be original. What I'm saying is, you don't have to buy the bad games do you? And in all truth many games that are said to be bad are okay anyway – take *Metrocross*. That got a bad(ish) review, but I thought it was very good. Anyway to my second point . . .
2. The Reviewers. Last Issue Gaz Penn forewarned us of the return of GL the witty word wizard (fat though he is). And although 'Nosha' is my all-time favourite reviewer, I didn't think he'd be taking place of GP, the Ed! In short why does Gaz 'Slap Head' Penn have to leave? What'll happen to his Black Hole!?! Can I look after it. Do I ask too many questions or what!?! Enough of that now for a serious question. Will Gaz Liddon be testing games again? I hope so, I really do.
3. I want to ask you a serious question Lloyd (another question?) and I want a serious answer. Why don't we ever get to see your face? Don't try to get out of answering that, LM – we want to know! It's getting a bit silly now, LLoyd. Fancy wearing a bag in CRASH! There must be good reason for your shyness. Have you got bad spots!? Don't worry, I have too. (isn't adolescent life a pain!) So don't be shy and come out of your shell.
4. (And this is a quickie) Why don't we see much of Rockford and Thingy these days? I miss the little blighters. Bye for now, Lloyd.

Anthony Joinson, Staffs

In answer to your questions Anthony . . . No, Gary Liddon is not coming back as a full-time games reviewer – he will however continue his technical column, and hopefully he'll drop in from time to time to help us out. We presume that GP will be bringing his black hole to The Games Machine with him, so there are no vacancies there I'm afraid. And finally, at long last I'm willing to reveal why I never show my face (gasp!) – no, it's nothing extraordinary, just that I'm a very superstitious person really. I've been so successful (check with Melissa Ravenflame) by not appearing, that now I'm afraid to! And perhaps Rockford feels the same, but in fact Oliver's time has been a bit circumscribed recently, but he assures me Rockford will continue. Hah!

LM

TOO LATE FOR OFFER?

Dear Lloyd,
You have finally managed to force me into writing a letter. I'm not writing to tell you what a great magazine you've got because if it wasn't good it wouldn't sell. I'm writing to complain – as a life long subscriber (I missed the first two but managed to order the back-numbers before they were sold out), I have enjoyed the great offers which appeared just as my subscription was running out (with three games and a US Gold mug to my name). I have been waiting patiently for this said offer to appear but it was not forthcoming. But a letter arrived for me yesterday (5th June) which told me that as I was a faithful reader I would save two pounds if I subscribed immediately. I filled in the cheque and posted the coupon the same day, stayed up to watch Scotland being beaten at Rugby, a little Bonanza and a bash at Elite (I found an unusual ship which does not appear on the Flight Grid Scanner and blocks the use of an energy bomb. It looks a little like a bird; can you tell me what it is? It blasted me and I can't find it again – it's not the first mission). Then, just after seven in the morning my edition of ZZAP! arrived with the special offer. Needless to say I would rather pay the two pounds and have the free game, especially considering what great games are on offer – would it be possible for me to pay the extra? (You will probably receive this letter at the same time as my cheque).

David Dickson, Moray

PS Could it be possible for you to accept photocopies of competition pages with a small corner cut from a certain page to stop multiple application (Note all Conservative MPs). Sorry if there are lots of spelling mistakes, my typing is not very good and I'm too tired to check it over.

I'm sure if you write, or ring, asking for the subscriptions department, they'll sort out something for you. We're aware that very special offers and ordinary offers tend to overlap, there's no way around that, but we do try to be fair to subscribers when that happens. And you can send in photocopies of any competition (unless otherwise stated), because the comps minion has a good memory for entrants trying it on more than once!

LM

ACE OF RHYTHM

Dear Lloyd,
I recently purchased Firebird's superb, budget sound system, *Microrhythm*. I rushed home to try it out, but to my surprise when the game had loaded, US Gold's *Ace of Aces* appeared. I thought this was odd so I tried the reverse side. Same again . . . even though the cassette had *Microrhythm* written on it. Mysterious is it not?

Brendon Walker, Hull

What strange happenings. I suppose that Ace of Aces and Microrhythm were mastered in the same place, and the person responsible for labelling the two products hadn't got his mind on the job. Mind you – you got a ten pound game for only £1.99, so I wouldn't complain too much. Think of the poor chap who shelled out a tenner for what he thought was Ace of Aces and got a Firebird budget game instead!

LM

I THINK THEREFORE I AM

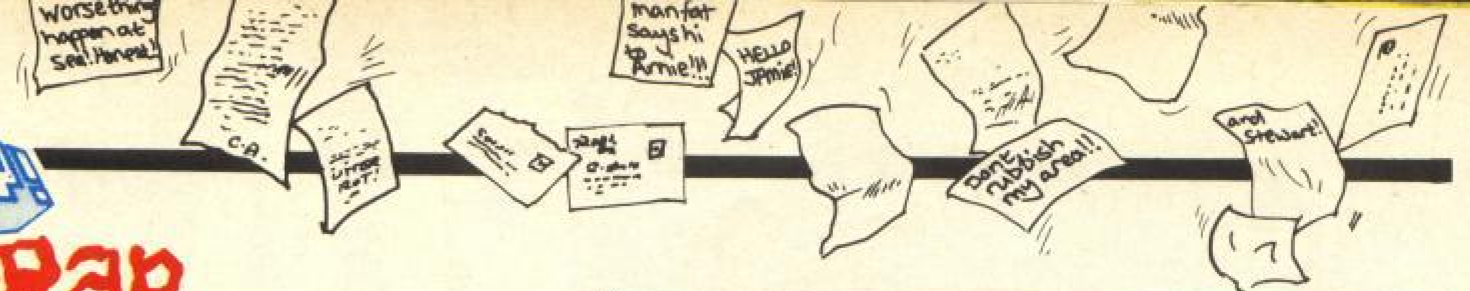
Dear Lloyd,
I had a thought (yes, once in a while I do). So, I put my little thought down onto paper (via the typewriter), and here it is . . .

1. Why don't you let all at ZZAP! Towers change places for just one issue, letting ol' Oli (no pun) do a bit of reviewing, along with say, Carol Kinsey and Cameron Pound. Maybe then we could see
   a) The artistic talents of JR on the cover of ZZAP! 64 and maybe even
   b) his UB40
2. Why can't you stick all of the competitions on one sheet or leaflet, because I do so miss those teensy-weensy little bits of my ZZAP!
3. I know this is a 64 mag, but can't you please put aside a page or two to the incredible (I use the word wisely) Amiga.
4. I admit it, I'm a half-wit, but what does PBM stand for?
5. Lloyd, you (and the Rrap) are the greatest, so keep up the good work. (ZZAP! could could be a little more mature, we're not all six years old you know!)
6. I read that you are trying to set up a holiday fund. Why not get the money off Gary Liddon? He did sell his Amiga to Andy Braybrook, didn't he?

Simon Calvert, Hertfordshire

1. *Very droll*
2. *Planning a magazine is a very difficult job (ask Mr Brennan!) – but as this is a regular request we'll see what we can do*
3. *Keep your eyes peeled – it's only a matter of time*
4. *Play By Mail (see page 83)*
5. *Thank You*
6. *Yes. He did sell his Amiga to Mr Braybrook, but he then spent all the proceeds on his telephone bill*

LM



ZZAP! RRAP

SUBSCRIPTION WORRIES

Dear Lloyd,
I have a point to make about subscriptions which I think will be on the minds of other ZZAP! readers. I have recently considered subscribing to ZZAP!, especially as there have been many great offers. However, I recalled when my friend, being an Amstrad owner, subscribed to AMTIX. All was well for him and he was pleased with the deal, however after three months, he got a letter informing him that AMTIX had finished and for the rest of his subscription time he would be sent a magazine called Computing with the Amstrad. All seemed well until he received the magazine, which in our opinion was scandalous, with a maximum of ten pages of reviews. I have considered subscribing, but I would like your assurance that the same thing will not happen to me.

Keep up the good work, and please introduce more arcade information into your great mag.

M Gaughan, Preston

It sometimes happens that a magazine has to cease publication for any number of reasons. In the case of AMTIX, the title was handed over to Database Publications and effectively absorbed into their existing Computing with the Amstrad as an AMTIX section. Obviously, once that had happened, Newsfield had no further control over what happened to the title. Part of the agreed handover was that AMTIX subscribers would be looked after, either offered a refund or the option of having their subscription changed to Computing with the Amstrad.

There are no guarantees in life, you know, so it's impossible to give assurances, but certainly the market pressure that forced AMTIX to be closed are not affecting ZZAP! in any way. Indeed, monthly sales of ZZAP! have increased by 10,000 over the last six months, making it firmly the best-selling Commodore magazine in Britain by quite a league. It must have years of life left in it yet, Mr Gaughan! By the way, if you turn to page 85, you should find enough arcade information to keep you happy for some time.

LM

LOST MAGAZINE

Dear Lloyd,
Since the sudden and disappointing demise of LM, a spare £1.00 each month has been jingling in my pocket, so this month I decided to buy CRASH (issue 42). Reading through the Forum I came across some interesting facts. Why were we ZZAP! readers not given such an item, on LM, as that in CRASH. I'm sure many people are asking just where did it go wrong? I understand that you are under no obligation to tell us anything, but it would be nice. Up until the beginning of June I was under the impression that my newsagent was just very slow with deliveries and I felt rather stupid receiving a string of negative replies from every newsagent in Stockport – even more so when I discovered that LM had passed away.

Why were we, the public, not given the slightest inkling as to the reasons behind LM's sudden non-existence. Not even a mention in passing was made and in fact the issue was avoided like the plague. Come on Lloyd, given your namesake a decent burial within your hallowed pages.

If this seems pointless, perhaps you could answer a few questions

1. Why should the producer of the best selling Commodore and Spectrum magazines allow its sister mag to drown?
2. If as you say, LM's readership was roughly three times that of ZZAP! why couldn't it help itself?
3. Why suddenly after a few teething problems was LM scrapped. If this was because of money, why has Newsfield already decided to release another more expensive computer magazine?
4. What were the results of LM's questionnaire? LM was fresh and exciting and witty and it had potential. At least 80% of the lads in my class read their own or my copy of LM.

Bring back LM please. I await a sensible response to this plea.

David Leicester, Stockport

Relating news of LM's demise was a decision for the editor to take, and at the time Gary Penn either didn't want to (or forgot!) – I wasn't privvy to his thoughts on the matter. LM's readership was certainly not three times that of ZZAP!'s (currently some 230,000), but sadly, although the sales were doing quite well and picking up very encouragingly, the advertising revenue was not. LM was not a cheap magazine to produce, with an editorial team more than twice that of ZZAP!, and lots more expense in photography costs, licence fees and reproduction – hardly 'teething' troubles, just the old one of money. Why you should think The Games Machine is 'more expensive' I have no idea. I assure you it will cost, per issue, about a seventh that of LM.

We all thought LM was a great mag (obviously), but it could never have survived without advertising revenue, which was thought to be available but turned out not to be – or at least, not fast enough to save it.

LM

SEQUELS II

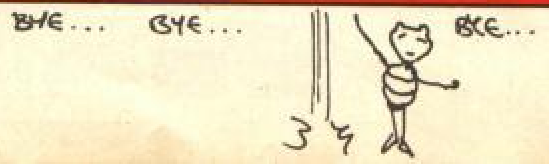
Dear Lloyd,
I am absolutely fed up about the way that software houses bring out a good game (for example *Spy Vs Spy*), and then bring out sequel upon sequel upon sequel after it. It's ruining the software industry because each sequel is worse than the one before. Can't the software houses think of any new, original software to bring out? Yet they still expect us to pay the same price for the sequel as for the first in the series. It's all the same in each of the sequel cases that the sequels are just so boring and repetitive in the aim of the game. So come on software houses. Pull your socks up!

Damon Smith, Watford

The thing is, the blame lies with you. As long as you keep buying sequels, software companies will keep on releasing them.

LM

It's time this failed surgeon took to the hills (so much cooler in this weather than the hot, steamy centre of tropical Ludlow) and watered his limp plants, plastered his dry throat and relaxed for a month (well, a day anyway). If there's any point about Commodore software, hardware, firmware, jollyware, badware or anywhere that you simply have to get off your chest before you burst, then I'm your man. Write to LLOYD MANGRAM, ZZAP! RRAP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB – and do it quick.





The eight planets of the Hyturian System are under attack by multitudinous, swarming, hordes of odious Star Thugs. There is but one hope. STARFOX. The most advanced fighting machine ever built. Unfortunately, so long is it since war raged within the System that all the old figher pilots are either senile, bedridden, or dead! What is needed is someone young, brave, and with a lust for action. In short, someone like YOU!!!

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AND WIN A UNI
ARCADE BRIEF

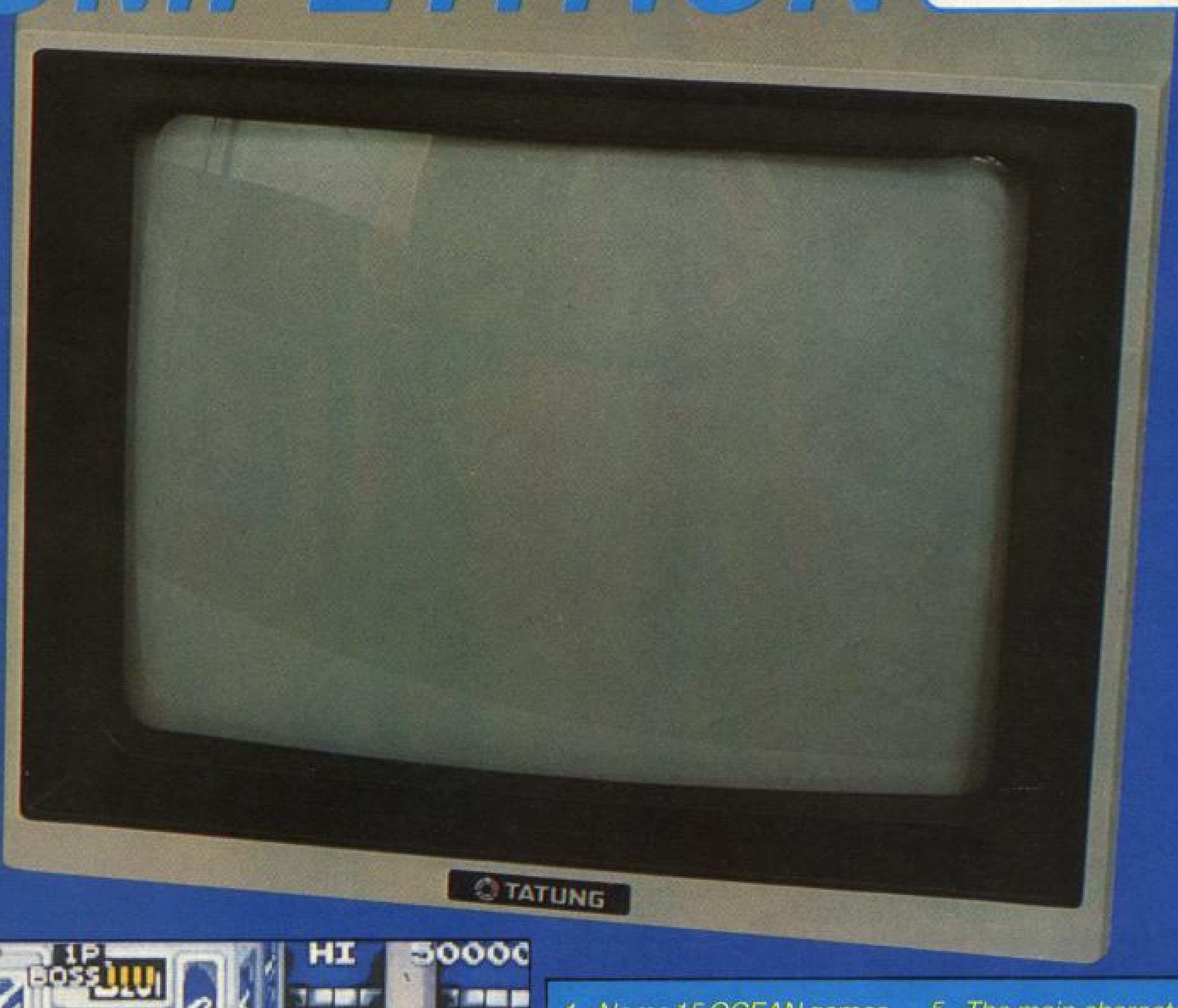


Those likely lads from OCEAN are just putting the finishing touches to their infamous Taito beat 'em up conversion, Renegade. So, to help the programmers copy the game correctly, they've taken delivery of a Renegade arcade machine. Neat huh? Well, they've more or less finished all the conversions, so they figured that one of you ZZAP!ers out there might like it. But wait – before you scream 'I ain't got no room for one o' them huge arcade thingies', this one is special. OCEAN, in their ultimate wisdom and good sense, decided to commission a special briefcase version, where the machine's innards are piled into a metal photography case with all the necessary connections to make it work. Plug it in at the mains, plug it into a monitor, plug in a joystick – and you're all set to maim and kill to your heart's delight.

You won't even have to nick the family goggle box, because they're also giving away a Tatung monitor! The complete set is worth *well* over £1,000 and all you have to do to win this once-in-a-lifetime prize and be the envy of the whole country, is to answer the few paltry questions:

ZZAP! COMP

QUE RENEGADE CASE
IN THIS GREAT COMPETITION





1. Name 15 OCEAN games that have been released for the 64 (games under the IMAGINE logo don't count).
2. Who writes most of the music heard on OCEAN and IMAGINE's games?
3. How many OCEAN games have received the ultimate accolade of a ZZAP! Gold Medal?
4. Of all the OCEAN character licenses, which game featured a famous burger bar?
5. The main character in Renegade is a vigilante, but can you name the infamous vigilante who became a folk hero in New York in 1984?

Simple? Good. Now, complete the following sentence in 15 words or less: 'If I don't win the OCEAN Renegade arcade machine I'm going to . . . '

Entries should be sent to, the **I WANT TO BE A RENEGADE COMPETITION, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB**, to arrive no later than October the 8th. Make sure that you enclose your full name and address, and a day-time telephone number (if possible).

Once again the time has come to face the challenge!

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HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT

A History Of The Shoot 'Em Up

The Commodore 64 micro has certainly played host to a fair share of shoot 'em ups during its five year history. So, as a long-overdue tribute to the humble blaster, Julian Rignall took a trip down to the archives to bring you his personal view of the greatest shoot 'em ups that have appeared during the Commodore's brief, but bright history.

PART ONE – THE PRE-ZZAP! DARK AGES

What genre we know and love so well, the shoot'em up, had its humble beginnings in the mid '70s, when a black and white video game appeared which required the player to shoot a square as it moved across the screen. A year or so later, technology advanced and a new company called Atari released two one-on-one games, *Tank* and *Air Combat*, which are archaic by today's standards, but still oddly enjoyable.

After a series of pretty ghastly space shoot 'em ups (Exidy's *Star Wars* influenced *Star Fire* being the most notable), the most famous shoot 'em up of them all was released – Bally/Midway's *Space Invaders*. This was the turning point of the video game, as millions were drawn to the arcades to see and battle the Invaders. The machine became a household name virtually overnight, and from there on the shoot 'em up was to become one of the most popular video game formats. There was no looking back.

Can anyone cast their mind back five years and remember whose game can claim the accolade of being the first Commodore shoot 'em up? The exact one is shrouded in the mists of time – but it's bound to have been an inferior arcade clone. During the early days, when the 64 had only just appeared on the market, shoot 'em up fans were gleefully purchasing inferior *Space Invader*, *Centipede* and *Scramble* clones in huge quantities. Blurbs boasting '100% machine code fast action – hi-res flicker-free sprite action' were commonplace, but usually the game itself was pretty poor. However, that was the standard, and those lucky enough to be able to afford a Commodore would quite happily sit for 15 minutes while their new *Scramble* clone loaded.

My earliest encounter with a Commodore blaster was in early '83 when I went to see a friend's friend's newly bought 64. Oddly enough, that person happened to be John Twiddy, who went on to program *The Last Ninja*. His only game was Jeff Minter's *Attack of the Mutant Camels*, a strange horizontally scrolling *Defender* game with original aspects. The tricky control method and great sound made quite an impression, but Broderbund's slightly older *Choplifter*, which I first saw at roughly the same time, really made me gasp. The objective was to fly behind enemy lines and rescue captives, all the while avoiding enemy tanks, planes and

▶ **Rabbit's archaic *Annihilator* claimed to be a *Defender* game – it doesn't look like or play like one though**



▶

HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT

A History Of The Shoot 'Em Up

helicopters. *Choplifter* became an arcade game early last year, and is also available on the Sega Master System – although the difference between the old and new versions is quite considerable!

Another pair of classics which evoke memories and a load of laughs are Rabbit's *Paratroopers* and *Annihilator*. The former was an extremely nasty game which gave the player control of a machine gun which was used to shoot the parachutes off soldiers as they baled out of passing aeroplanes. If enough troopers managed to land, they built a big tank and blew up your gun. The graphics and sound were laughably bad, but the gameplay was superb – classic sicko stuff.

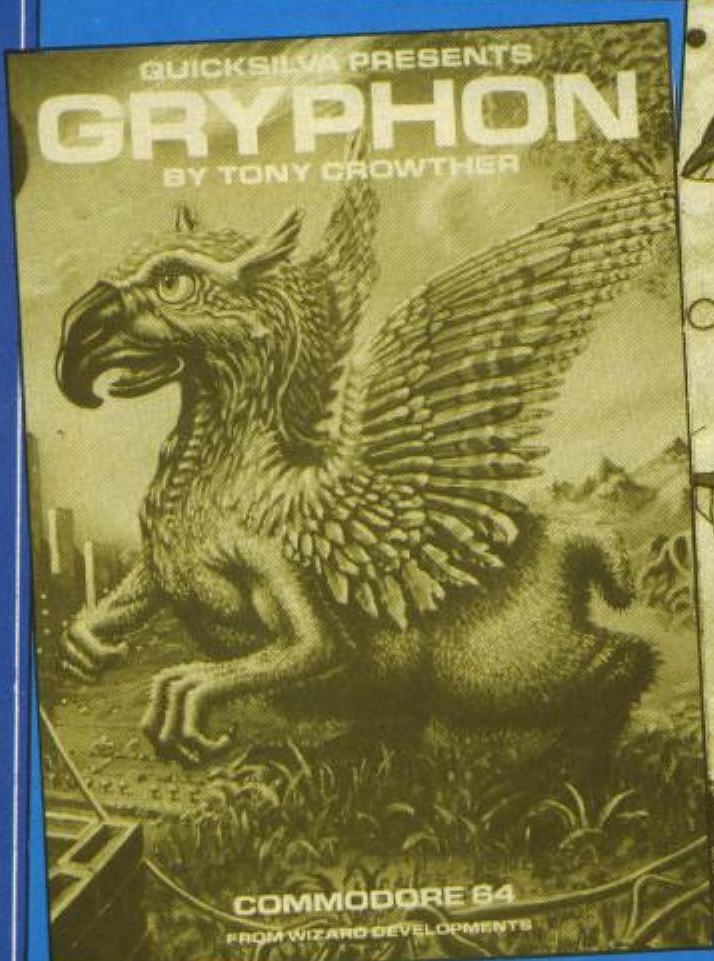
'Patrol the rocky terrain of a distant planetoid, defending humanoids from the clutches of hovering Landers, Baters, Bombers, Pods and Swarmers' was the game described on *Annihilator*'s inlay. It sounded just like *Defender*, but the only thing that the two games have in common is a scrolling floor. *Annihilator*'s graphics and sound were terrible, and the gameplay was incredibly simplistic!

US Gold's *Beach Head* created quite a sensation when it appeared. The four level arcade war game boasted some impressive graphics and sound, and I remember a small crowd gathered in Aberystwyth's computer shop staring at a monitor with their mouths hanging open. The computer press loved it, and it went on to sell in vast quantities – albeit undeservedly so. The gameplay was a little too simplistic – something that you didn't discover until you got it home and started playing!

Two fast working programmers, Tony Crowther and Steve Evans produced a series of great shoot 'em ups for Sheffield-based Alligata between late 1983 and early 1984. Tony Crowther's *Loco* created quite a sensation with its great music and gameplay, and *Killerwatt*, an original scroller in which an attack of whales, light bulbs and ducks was endured became a cult hit. The less prolific Evans produced a *Phoenix* clone called *Eagle Empire* which mirrored the arcade game perfectly, and an excellent shooting adventure called *Rocket Roger* in which the player explored a denizen-filled cave system in

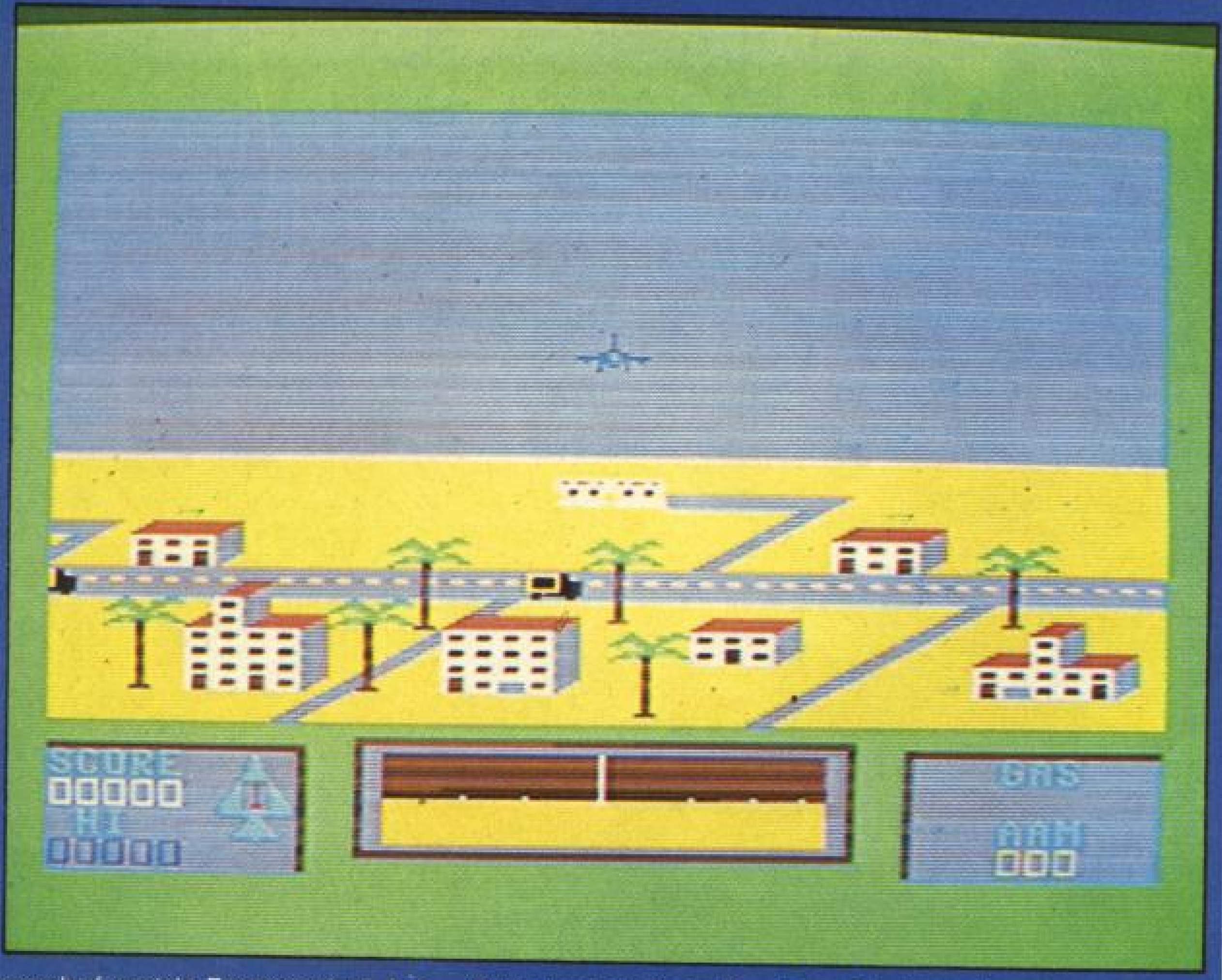


► Back in '82 Broderbund's *Choplifter* was wowing computer fanatics. Originally available on ROM cartridge, it cost an incredible £35!









▶ **Virgin's horizontally scrolling *Falcon Patrol* proved popular – and deservedly so**

search of crystals. Evans reached a career high with *Guardian*, a superlative *Defender* clone which had all the features and playability of the arcade original. It's still one of the best shoot 'em ups available.

Towards the end of '84, Crowther left Alligata for another Sheffield based company, Gremlin Graphics. His first blaster for his new employers was *Potty Pigeon*, an odd scrolling game in which a severely hassled bird built a nest. After that came the sequel to *Loco*, the graphically and sonically impressive *Suicide Express*.

Still unsettled, Crowther left Gremlin and joined Quicksilva, where he produced the superb, but sadly bugged *Gryphon*. Unfortunately the bugs weren't spotted until after the first mastering, and Quicksilva never bothered to remaster. This was a shame really, as *Gryphon* was definitely the best Crowther program of them all. He followed-up with *Black Thunder*, an unashamed copy of *Suicide Express* with nothing more than different graphics and sound to distinguish between the two.

One of the best games of 1984 was Novagen's *Encounter*, an extremely fast, first-person 3D *Battlezone* type game with a variety of hostile craft to destroy. The gameplay was absolutely superb, and I can remember jumping up and down in my seat when I first played it! *Encounter* was highly acclaimed by both Personal Computer Games and C&VG, but was sadly missed by many – maybe because it was one of those games that didn't look impressive while static.

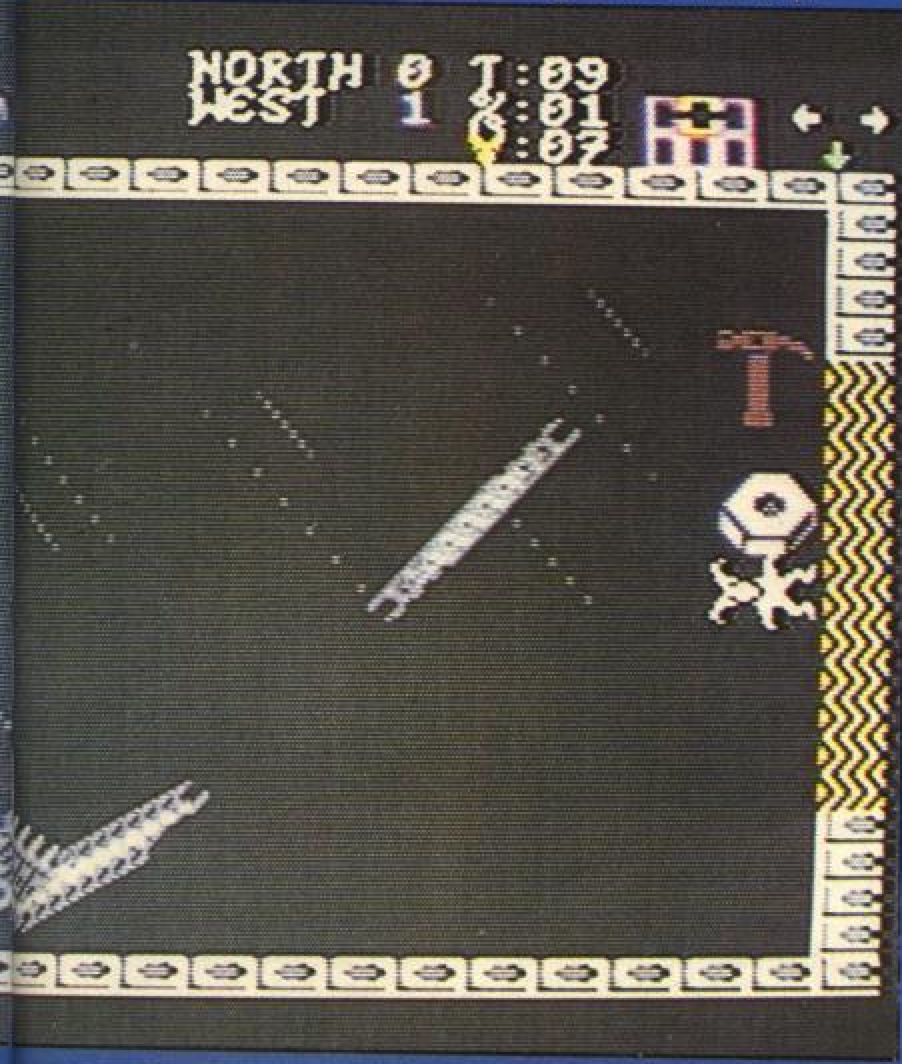
Steve Lee's Virgin releases, *Falcon Patrol I & II*, were two horizontally scrolling games of some note. Both were set in the Middle East and gave the player control of a fleet of Harrier Jump Jets, used to shoot down enemy planes and helicopters. At the time, the scrolling on both was considered smooth, although when I played the second one a couple of months ago, it was far from that! They're both still fun, though.

A particularly annoying situation occurred when Parker Brother's released the official conversion of *Gyruss*. It was a very, very faithful conversion, incorporating some great music and just the right feel – but was only available on ROM cartridge at the ridiculous price of £25! That was a real shame, as only a handful of people ever got to play it. Also available at the same time (and price) was the official conversion of *Star Wars*, which wasn't too bad. Luckily, Domark will soon be releasing their own conversion of the game, and hopefully it'll retain all the playability of the coin-op original.

Jeff Minter was a veritable hive of industry during 1984, producing a series of very impressive shoot 'em ups through the year. *Revenge of the Mutant Camels* followed on from *AMC*, and introduced some of the whackiest sprites and zaniest gameplay ever seen on a home micro! This time around the player took the role of the camel, and tackled a wide variety of alien forms, including 'Rubber Keys' (Spectrums to you), IRATA (spell that backwards), Rizzlas, Telephone Boxes and Pac Men – amongst other things! Next came *Sheep in Space*, a slightly more 'serious' game (if that's the correct term). In this classic the player took control of a flying sheep, capable of spitting deadly bonios of doom at any attackers. The objective was to fly down a horizontally scrolling passageway and guard huge Ecosystems from attack by alien craft. The action was reminiscent of *Defender*, but there were plenty of original aspects to the gameplay. The best game to come out of the Llamasoft stable during '84 was definitely *Ancipital*, a totally original shoot 'em up adventure in which a strange beastie, half man/half goat, was guided through 100 screens of well-weird psychedelic action. A 'Phil Collins Emulator', outlandish sprites, strange gravity and superlative gameplay pushed this head and shoulders above the opposition.

Ancipital may have been one of the best shoot 'em ups of '84, but by far the most controversial was Access' *Raid Over Moscow*, which was released in Britain under the auspices of US Gold. The object of this five-part game was to set Russian defences back 20 years by penetrating the Iron Curtain and destroying the robot which controlled the reactor room beneath the Kremlin – the main power source of the entire Soviet defence. The mission involved flying a space shuttle inside enemy lines, battling through land defences, shooting the guards outside the Kremlin and finally entering the reactor room to destroy the robot. The game's right-wing bias caused an outrage, and some members of the computer public over-reacted beyond belief. CND supporters gathered outside the US Gold headquarters and protested that the game's militarist tendencies made war acceptable to youngsters. All of this was really quite ludicrous – apart from the fact that the plot was completely unbelievable, it was after all only a game.

▶ **One of the best shoot 'em ups of '84 – Jeff Minter's classic *Ancipital*. There's 100 screens of fast and whacky action to blast through.**



Next month, Julian takes a few more rose-tinted peeks at the shoot 'em up catalogue, taking up the story from where ZZAP! began (I really think that we're all too young for this nostalgia – The Ed.).

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Follow me unto *Phalsberg*, fellow Wizardlings, as we check out the latest French numerette from Infogrames/Ere Informatique. And sing along with our nostalgic look at another role playing game – *The Bard's Tale*. Goggle at the C64 graphics for *Knight Orc*, wonder at the long list of tips, and . . . get reading!

PHALSBERG

Infogrames/Ere Informatique, £14.95, disk only

Infogrames keep trying their best to come up with a winner, and the Wiz keeps being rude about their efforts. This is all very embarrassing, so imagine my delight when Infog supremo David Crossweller rang to say that 'At last' they had a game that was 'Right up my street . . . '

Phalsberg is a role-playing game in which you create a character whose future is determined both by your own decisions during the game and also by the character's skills. The gameplay involves a lot of tally-hoing across the countryside in search of treasure, monsters, and all manner of mayhem.

In most RPGs, skills are set at the beginning of the game by a throw of the dice, and *Phalsberg* is no exception – a list of skills (see below) is flashed on the screen and you then have a chance to 'throw' for high scores in each skill category.

MANY SKILLS MAKE LIGHT WORK

Because a character's skills are incredibly important during a game like this, it's good to see that *Phalsberg* provides not only a good selection of skill ratings, but also a means of concentrating on certain categories. The program adds bonus points to the marks gained by throwing the dice according to the order of selection, with higher marks being awarded to the categories you throw for first. What this means is that, for example, you may wish to achieve as high a 'Strength' rating as possible for your character and, by choosing to throw for this category first, you stand a better chance.

Once you've assigned skill ratings to your character, you give it a Name, a Race (Human, Dwarf, or Elf) and, if the character is Human, a Profession. There are four professions (or 'Casts' as the program calls them) – Thief, Warrior, Magician, and Cleric. Each Cast requires a particular balance of skills, so for example a character can only become a Thief if its dexterity rating exceeds 11 points. At this point the significance of being able to throw for extra points for a certain skill becomes obvious.

PHALSBERG SKILLS TABLE

SKILL	MAX POINTS
1.	Constitution 15
2.	Life Points 15
3.	Energy (1)+(2)
4.	Strength 10
5.	Protection 10
6.	Reflex/Dexterity 10
7.	Intelligence 10
8.	Beauty 5
9.	Charisma (7)+(8)
10.	Money 1000
11.	Experience 10

Energy and Charisma are determined by the product or sum of the two previous skills. Each skill plays a certain role in the game – for example, Charisma influences the outcome of encounters with other characters, while Intelligence dictates how many languages you can speak, and therefore how many characters you can talk to.

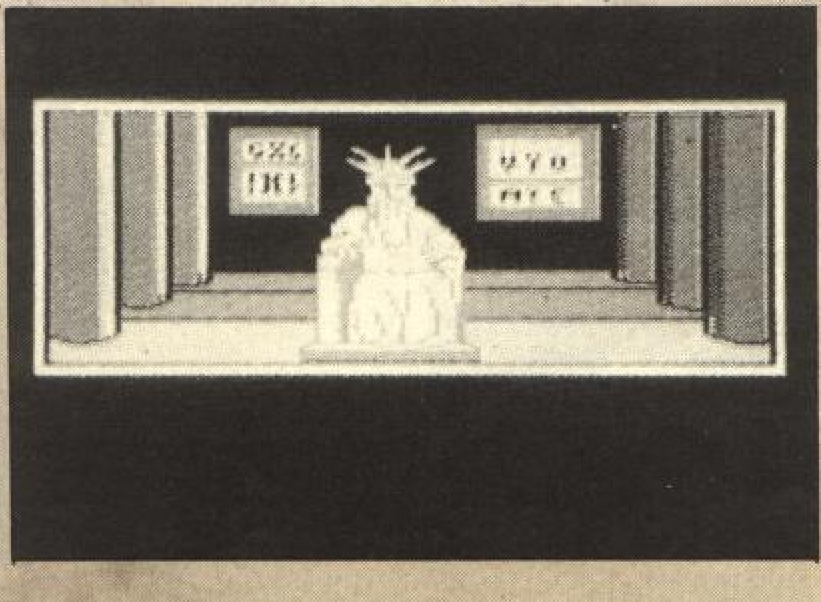
Experience points play a special role – you can use them to 'top up' any other skill rating which you may consider to be dangerously low. You accumulate more experience points during the game as you win battles and overcome obstacles.

Once you've created your character, you SAVE it onto a preformatted disc. Make sure you've got one before you start, as the program won't let you play without one. This disc keeps track of your character, enabling you to SAVE it for another day – very important in RPG's where you may spend a lot of time and effort building up a character, particularly its 'Experience Points'.

IN PLAY . . .

The game loads with a pleasantly programmed rendition of Pictures at An Exhibition. Once you've created your character, however, the . . . er . . . well, let's face it, the *problems* start.

Problem number one is the appearance of the display. Once ▶



again, as with *Mandragore*, and a host of other quasi-RPG's, we have a clumsily designed alternative character set trying to present a series of graphic symbols that convey location information. Well, it can be argued that we've come to expect this sort of display – after all, we've seen it in some of the Ultima games, so it should be good enough for Infogrames and good enough for us.

Trouble is, when you combine that text-based graphics screen with an atrociously formatted text window underneath, the display begins to look very untidy. The Wiz doesn't like messy screens, not if he's going to have to look at them for a long time. Today's software should be able to do better than this.

PLUS DE PROBLEMETTES . . .

But even at this point, I hear you cry, the game should not be beyond redemption. Pretty it may not be, but how doth it play? At this point, we encounter problemette numero deux. This is la problemette de la traduction, or – ahem – a slight probby about the old translation, okay yah?

The translation problems occur in two ways, and both affect the gameplay. First, the manual is unclear in points and mentions commands (such as Hunt) that do not appear in the program. Since you meet many 'Huntable' creatures, this omission was baffling and frustrating. Also, there are commands that differ in the manual to the way they appear in the program – the manual says 'Heal', the program expects 'Treat'. You have to exercise the old grey matter to work these things out. Secondly, the screen display itself is not always very clear. If you look at the screenshot, you can see that there are a small batch of abbreviated commands (see below for further details) starting, top right, with Star. This is short for 'Start', which the manual says means 'Leave' – you and I would normally say 'Move'. Not very clear.

The display also boasts some very awkward messages, such as 'You Are Carrying: Any' (any what??), and often refers to objects that simply cannot be found or examined. 'A Goblin appears before you, he is carrying a purse' declares the program excitedly. Sweating with exhilaration, you waggle your joystick and select 'Atta' (for Attack) and then 'Gobl' (for Goblin). You succeed brilliantly, the Goblin is dead, the Goblin has disappeared, and . . . ooops . . . so has the purse. How frustrating!

MORE SERIOUS PROBLEMETTES

These, however, are still little niggles, aren't they? I mean, the game may be a bit on the annoying side, but there's a lot to it and we should be able to put up with its funny little habits. Unfortunately, there are worse problems . . .

The game is played using a system of menus controlled by the joystick. Each turn you select one of six menu headings. These are Star, Draw, Orde, Text, Ques, Powe, Auto, and Save. Star, as we've already mentioned, puts you on the road from one place to the next. Draw gives you a piccy; Text clears the screen and shows you the last screenful of text messages that would otherwise have been scrolled into oblivion outside the small response window; Ques enables you to question other characters; Powe tells you your status; Auto gives you piccies without having to ask for them with Draw; Save saves. Orde is the one to watch, however. It means 'Enter a command' and if you select it you receive a further sub-menu with a list of verbs. This list, as I've mentioned, differs slightly from the manual which can be confusing in itself. However, the problems really begin, when you select a verb that requires an object, such as Examine. You then get a further sub-sub-menu with a list sub-sub-sub-menus. Thus you might enter Exam, then select Place from the list, and from the final menu select Sanctuary, since you have discovered a sanctuary nearby and would like to Examine it.

At this point, the proggy gets very wobbly. For the most part, the responses to your actions are short and uninteresting. In search of excitement, therefore, I selected Enter whilst in a village, and then – on a whim – selected Objects instead of Places. I then selected Berries. The program bravely attempted to enter the Berries, triumphantly displayed SYNTAX ERROR LINE 1234987 (or words to that effect), and then, realising that I had tricked it, went into a sulk that only a reset could cure.

Ah well. Us adventurers are positively crying out for a good role playing game. The fact is, whatever the pundits may say, that RPG's are not hard to program. That's why so many apparently mediocre programmers get involved in them and so many excellent programmers seek greater challenges. Now if someone like Mike Singleton were to tackle the RPG problem, I'm sure we'd see something exciting.

Phalsberg is superficially complex, offers a large number of well thought out features, and completely fails to implement them satisfactorily. Infogrames say that many of the problems I've discussed will be checked out, and it's therefore possible that a new version may be released. If it is, then I'll let you know – in the meantime, it may be 'up my street', but I'm afraid I won't be opening the door!

ATMOSPHERE	**30%**
INTERACTION	**38%**
CHALLENGE	**58%**
OVERALL	**47%**

THE BARD'S TALE

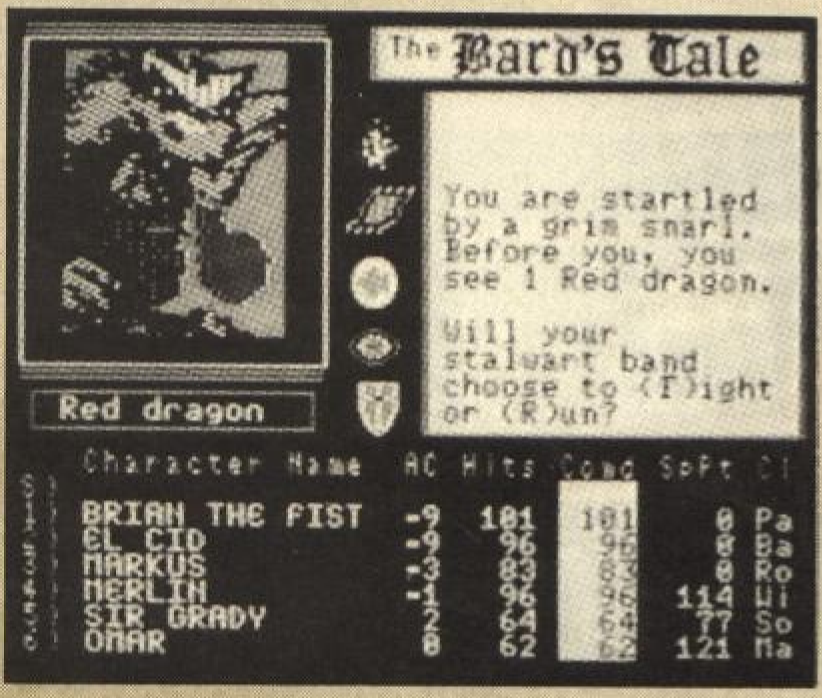
This is a classic RPG from Electronic Arts, the US company who have recently set up in the UK and whose products should now be more readily available. To celebrate their arrival, and also to provide a pointed comparison with *Phalsberg*, the Wiz records some brief notes about *The Bard's Tale* . . .

Unlike a lot of computer RPG's, this game takes place in a large, mappable town. There are no forests or mountains to wade through – just endless winding streets full of forbidding doorways and dark alleys. The city of Skara Brae holds monsters of all sorts at every corner, but you must defeat them all if you are going to dethrone the evil Mangar and restore peace to the city.

The presentation of this program is excellent. A small graphics window provides an attractive peep-hole into the street before you – while on the right the text window boasts smooth-scrolling, unambiguous messages giving you clear instructions on what to do next.

You can have up to six members in your party drawn from seven different races. These are: Human; Elf; Dwarf; Hobbit; Half-Elf; Half-Orc; and Gnome. In addition there are ten available professions, or 'character classes' ranging from Rogue through Bard to Wizard, with each character having 11 attributes. And if that's not enough for you, there are also ten categories of objects (including musical instruments) and hordes of monsters, ranging from Kobolds to Blue Dragons.

The best thing about *The Bard's Tale*, apart from the atmosphere (chilly at night, especially) and the large range of spells and other features, is the way in which the program makes it easy to plan strategy. In each encounter with the enemy you have to work out how to get your party to work together in the most effective way, considering such factors as their position (foremost is first to be attacked), their fighting tactics (Spells? Swords? Even hiding away!), and the way in which they support each other.



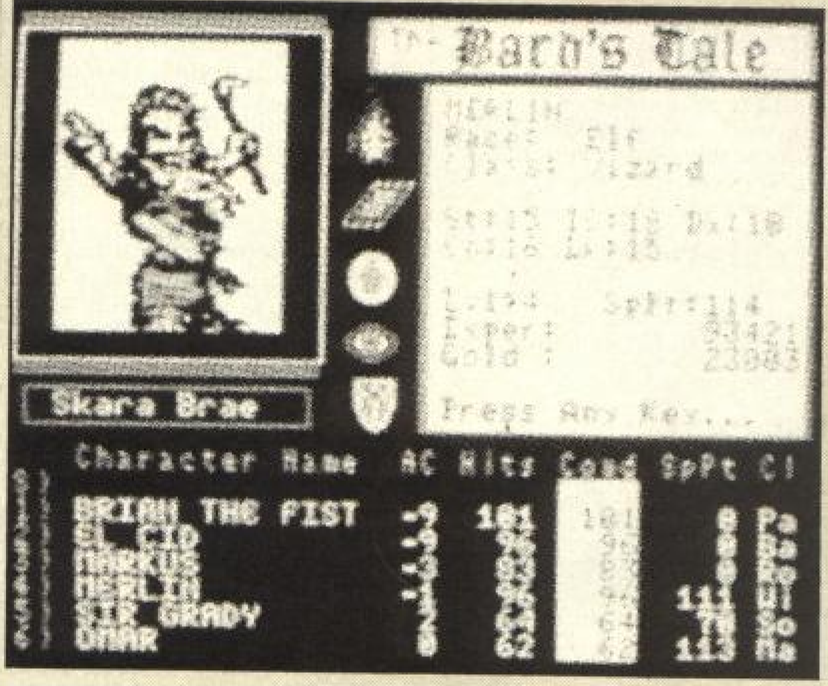
Although the action is non-stop, the program never rushes your decision making, giving you time to think and marshall your forces. This increases the challenge of the game and the satisfaction of winning a fight, since you feel (quite rightly) that the outcome was a direct result of your tactics rather than a simple fall of the dice.

Interesting features include the ability to coerce monsters to join your party and fight for you (by magic, of course), and the use of the Bard's musical prowess to stir your fighters into action and add strength to their sword-arms. Of course you also get to hear the music, which, although not very impressive by today's standards, still adds to the adrenaline rush as you march into battle.

Bad points include the appallingly slow disk accesses (especially when you're preparing a SAVE disc – a task which seems to take half a morning), and a shortage of general commands apart

from fighting and casting spells – though there are some transactions to be carried out in various emporiums throughout the town. What there is, however, is extremely well presented and programmed, very playable, and attractively packaged.

As a rule, RPG's have always been the poor relations on the computer games scene, but *The Bard's Tale* – although it's nearly three years old – manages to put up an excellent fight.



ADVENTURE PREVIEW!

KNIGHT ORC REVEALED!

The Wiz is proud to present a sneak preview of Knight Orc's C64 graphics. Although these are not quite finished, it looks as though the quality will be rather better than Level 9's past efforts.







WIZARD'S MAILBAG

First, a sad letter from **Pat Winstanley** of **Adventure Contact** and, following that, some good news. As most readers will know, Adventure Contact is a small magazine dealing with problems involved in creating and marketing games written using the Quill, GAC, Genesis and pure ingenuity. Time and finance have meant that Pat has had to drop the magazine, but at the time of going to press I understand that it has been taken over and will continue publishing. More news when I get it.

THUMBS DOWN . . .

Samee Khan writes in to complain that the tip for Zzzz . . . (Thumb a lift at the road) printed in a previous issue doesn't work. The Wiz isn't sure about this, but I think you'll find that THUMB A LIFT works okay at the road, provided you enter it when the Sandman is passing. **Daniel Bond** of Greater Manchester seems to agree . . .

. . . AND THUMBS UP

'In one of the earliest issues of ZZAP! you did a review of *Hitchhiker's Guide*', writes **Mark Short**, 'After reading the book, seeing the television series, and hearing the tape, I wonder if it still stands up well against software like *The Pawn* and other Infocom classics like *Bureaucracy*. If you could tell me what it's like and the sort of review you would give it now, I would be grateful . . . '

This is always an interesting question – if a game were to be released nowadays, how would we rate it? At this point the Wiz has to admit to sacrilege – I didn't actually enjoy Hitchhiker's all that much. Don't get me wrong – I think it's an excellent game, very well designed, and worthy of the success it has achieved. If that doesn't make sense, remember that my own feelings about a game are exactly that – my own. I hope that after several years of reviewing games, however, that I can tell when I'm being eccentric and when I'm following the popular taste, and in the case of Hitchhiker's I reckon I'm being a little eccentric. Doubtless Mike Woodroffe of Adventuresoft will contend that that I'm always eccentric, but there you go . . .

Back to the point, however. I think Hitchhiker's still stands up pretty well against the opposition. If you're thinking of spending that sort of money on it you won't go far wrong. On the other hand, if you've read the book, seen the film, and heard the tape, do you really want to play the game? Mightn't you get more satisfaction out of something new? Like Guild of Thieves? Perhaps not. . . .

COME ON INFOCOM . . . !

'Every month', writes **Chris Cobb**, 'I look in those few famous pages in ZZAP! (the Adventure Section), and find yet another Infocom classic, with yet another improved parser, and yet another massive price tag (always between £25 and £40). Come on, Infocom, I know you need the money, but don't we all? I think you'll sell loads more if you bring all your titles down to a half-reasonable price like £19.99, like Magnetic Scrolls . . . '

Perhaps it's worth noting that Infocom have of course been taken over by Activision, and Activision have recently moved into profit by re-targetting their product at the lower end of the market. There's no doubt that you will always have to pay for quality, but I wouldn't rule out a price reduction on Infocom titles, or some form of special deal, in the future. More a case of 'come on Activision' than come on Infocom.

MANUAL HANKY-PANKY?

'I have recently received the incredible *Graphic Adventure Creator*. Well, at least I think it's incredible – you see I have somehow misplaced the instruction manual. Please, if anyone could photocopy or send me an instruction book I would be very very grateful.' Thus writes **Scott Robson** of Australia. Scott, I hope you will forgive the Wiz for suggesting that the best place to write for a new manual is Incentive Software. And I would also suggest that you enclose an International Reply Coupon. After all, if someone is going to go to the trouble of sending you a manual, you might at least pay for the postage! You should be aware however, that requests for copies of manuals are often treated with suspicion – for obvious reasons, I would have thought.

HELP!

'Dear Wiz . . . Heellp!' – stop right there! The Wiz regretfully has to repeat his sad but necessary warning . . . I cannot reply in person to cries for help. That's what the Clever Contacts are there for – use them well! The Wiz would gladly enter into correspondence, but if you saw the number of letters that arrive each month, you'd realise why it is an impractical proposition. Sorry, fellow Wizzes, but please save your stamps and direct your pleas to those better able to answer them promptly.

LAW BREAKERS!

'Me and a few of my adventuring mates have written an adventure using *GAC*. Please could you tell me if we would be breaking any laws by selling it ourselves by post.'

Aha, a good point, Lee Ricketts of Middlesborough. All Wizzes should realise that there are strict rules of conduct, and not a few legal issues, involved in selling by mail-order. Luckily, help is at hand in the form of your local Citizens Advice Bureau. CAB's are usually able to offer free (but limited) legal advice via their resident solicitor. Ring them up, explain the situation, and ask for an appointment.

Lee also asks 'If we send the program to a major software company, who would name the retail price.' Well, Lee, the software house would fix the price, and you and I would name it – we would call it 'outrageous'!

WIZARD TIPS!

The Wiz has got a real bumper crop this month. Firstly I'll respond to repeated requests for Infocom tips by shedding some light on Hollywood Hijinx and others, give you some start-up clues on Guild of Thieves, plus other assorted nuggets worth more to an anxious adventurer than a caveful of Cavezats. All this brought to you courtesy of **The Wiz, John Hogarth, Russell Wallace, Nick Carter, Darren Hebelen, and Frekrik Lindelof.**

HOLLYWOOD HIJINX

Remove lenscap from projector, turn it on, focus it, then put file in and look at screen. This will then give you the name of a tune to play on the piano in the parlour. On the beach, light candle (wax statuette) with the fire on the beach – the candle melts some wax, insert match in wax – the wax head is now covered with thin coating of wax which will keep it dry whilst swimming. To get the sack, hold the sack, open window, then open sack. The model in the game room is in fact a game in which the object is to move the atomic chihuahua East towards the monument and get the ring, defeating any obstructions he will find in his way. The coloured buttons control his movements – start with the Green.

GUILD OF THIEVES

Pull the rope then jump onto the jetty at the beginning. Don't touch the Statue until you've been into the hill and down the rope ladder. Drop the Statue as soon as you fall into the well, then go Down and North. To get down the slippery shaft, first dig in the sand, then wear the Wetsuit Boots. Don't forget to look under things. The bars aren't as strong as they seem.

PLANETFALL

Search Floyd.
To repair the Computer, remember 'Fantastic Voyage'. Notice that the microbe seems to be attracted to the heat of the laser. Insert card Through slot – Holding a conference? Dial 748 for help. Ladders extend if dropped – to eight metres.

SORCEROR

There are two important things in the fairground. To solve the maze, remember what you did with the garlic in Zork 1. The flash of orange light in the coal mine merits investigation. The rope and timber are useful, but you can't take them out of the mine. There are two uses for the Meef spell.

KOBYASHI NARU – the complete solution!

Select Wisdom, activate Solance, pull Solance, North, analyse Tunnel, ascend Cliff, push Boulders, dive Pool, swim Water, use Solance, swim Klam, get Pearl, swim Water, ascend Water, descend Cliff, South, East, select knowledge, get Scimitax, South, analyse Tree, analyse Plant, throw Scimitax at stems, throw Scimitax at Plant, take Leaf, take Pod, North, East, activate Pod, throw Pod at Maw, South, get Flower, North then East (to let poison take effect before curing) use Leaf, North, ascend Obelisk, jump Barrier, West, West, West, North, select understanding, analyse Megaunit, activate Megaunit, get Lasalite, South, East, jump Pit, East, activate Lasalite, drop Lasalite, take Lasalite, take Wheel, West, throw Wheel into pit, jump Hoverdroid, analyse Perch, West, activate Lasalite, use Lasalite, East, activate Computer, South, South, take Wheel, West, West, jump Pit, West, North, North . . . Adventure complete!!

ZZZZZ..

Getting the hat gets the man out of the well.
Not getting noticed on the second road? Raise sign, raise hand.

WITCHES CAULDRON

Moonshine, whiskey – who cares? To recite the feline name, you have to be a bit backwards!

HAMPSTEAD

Want some money? Join the queue.
Newsagents are worth a look.
The bench is there to be sat on!

DRACULA

Check out under the carpet in the count's room.
Make sure you go to the up-line platform after buying your ticket.
Net Renfield – means found in store-room.

NECRIS DOME

An electro-magnet will dispose of an obstacle, but you will have to assemble it from bits found lying around.

THE HULK

Plug gas outlet with wax then bite lip.

Clever Contacts

Tass Times, Spiderman, Borrowed Time, Mindshadow, The Pawn, The Hulk, Zzzzz, Neverending Story, Hobbit, Adventure Land, Castle of Terror, Sherlock, Pirate Advnture, Hitchhikers, Wishbringer, Circus, Zork I, II, III, Fourth Protocol, Price of Magic, Dracula, Ultima III, IV, Mugsy's Revenge, Sanction, Bored of the Rings, Boggit, Ship of Doom, Secret Mission, Hampstead, Mission Asteroid, Sea Stalker, Holy Grail, Ballyhoo, Spellbreaker, Gremlins, Red Moon, Worm In Paradise.
David Woodberry, Nutbourne, Lane End, Bembridge, Isle of Wight

Voodoo Castle, Subsunk, Seabase Delta, Hobbit, Grand Larceny, Munroe Manor, Castle of Terror, Dallas Quest, Zork I, Murder on the Waterfront, Mindshadow, Neverending Story, Project 1: Mission Volcano, Ninja, Secret of Bastow Manor, Aztec Tomb Adventure, Castle of Mydor, Raka-Tua Adventure, Himalayan Adventure, Nuclear Wargamaes
Mario Moeller, 38 Greenvale Drive, Greenvale, VIC 3047, Australia.

Zork I, II, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Dracula 1,2,3, Zzzz, Redhawk, Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Hobbit, Quest for the Holy Grail
The Microgen Cracking Crew (Attn Lee Anstey), Microgen 1st Floor, Kenham House, Wilder Street, Bristol

Hunchback 1,2, Labyrinth, Subsunk, Seabase Delta, Time Machine, Adventureland, Terrormolinos, Hulk, Spiderman, Nightmare Planet, Heroes of Karn, Jewels of Babylon
Mark Firman, 11 Denmark Drive, Sedbury, Chepstow, Gwent, NP0 7BD

The Boggit, Hobbit, Mindshadow, Hulk, Terrormolinos, Golden Baton
M Greenwell, 28 King Richards Hill, Earl Shilton, Leics, LE9 7EY Tel: Earl Shilton 46752.

Snowball, Return to Eden, Worm in Paradise
Ross Gordon, Balandra, Summerhouse Road, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1QB

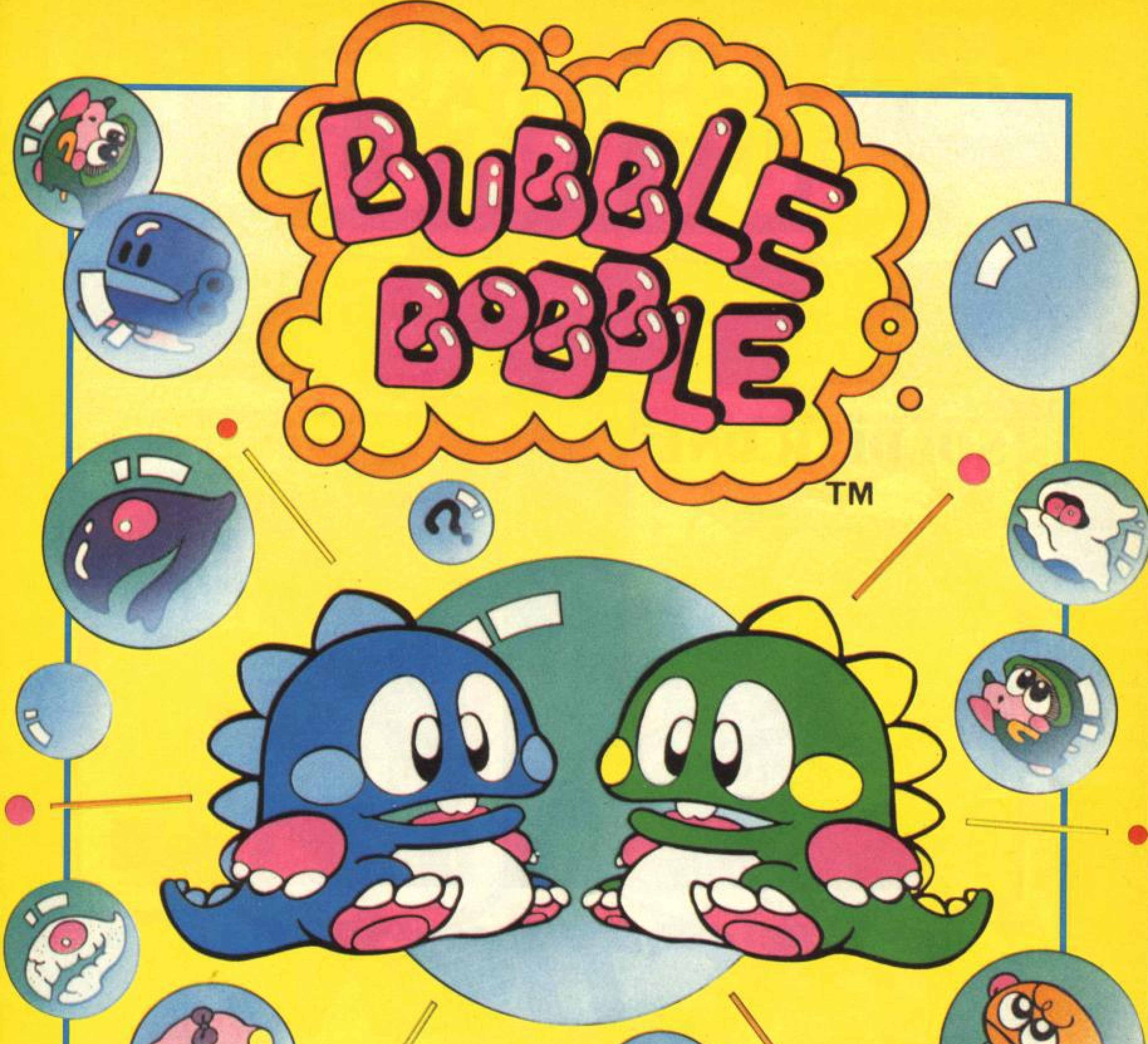
The Pawn, The Hulk, Dungeon Adventure, Advnture Quest, Colossal Adventure (Level 9)
James Duffy, 23 The Hiron, Cheylesmore, Coventry, CV3 6HS

Hollywood Hijinx, Zork III, Infidel, Cutthroats, Starcross, Deadline, Ballyhoo, Wishbringer, Enchanter, Sorceror, Spellbreaker, Seastalker, Leather goddesses, Hitchhikers Guide, Zork I, The Pawn, Bards Tale, Phantasie, Ultima III,IV, Tass Times, Borrowed time, Mindshadow, Tracer Sanction, Pilgrim, Bugsy, Dracula, Very Big Cave Adventure (Pt1), Nine Princes in Amber, Wizard of Oz, Worm in Paradise, Return to Eden, Colossal Adventure, Gremlins, Dungeon Adventure, Red Moon, Heroes of Karn, Perseus And Andromeda, Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Hulk, Spiderman, Fantastic Four
Guy Thomas, 17 Borstal Hill, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4NA Tel: 0227 274846.

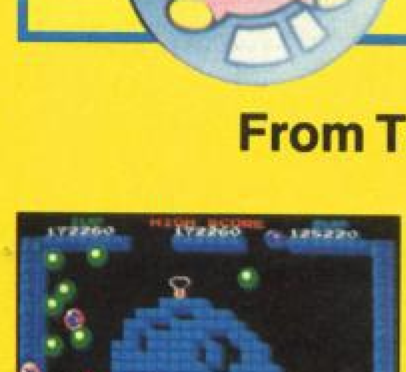
Vera Cruz, Red Moon, Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, Worm In Paradise, Hulk, Hobbit, Upper Gumtree, Hacker, Grand Larceny, Merry Christmas from Melbourne House, Robin of Sherwood, Snow Queen, Kentilla, Gremlins, Terrormolinos, Lords of Time, Pirate Adventure, Sherlock, Bored of the Rings, Dracula, Boggit, Twin Kingdom Valley, Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Eureka, Colditz, Valkyrie 17
Jason Jennings, 102 Berkely Road, Shirley, Solihull, Birmingham, West Midlands, B900

Zim Sala Bim, Jewels of Babylon, Dragonworld, Zork I, II, III, Mindshadow, Ninja, Forest of Evil, Mountain Palace Adventure, Ring of Power, Magic Stone, Gremlins, Hulk, Spiderman, Hobbit, The Helm, Dallas Quest, Stranded, Quest for the Holy Grail, Time Machine, Adventureland, Little Indians, Perseus and Andromeda, Lucifer's Realm, Wizard of Akyrz, Emerald Isle, Zzzz . . ., Hunchback, Planet of Death, Upper Gumtree, Dodgy Geezers, Frankenstein, Starcross Aage Krogh Christoffersen, Tinglevvej 4, 2820 Gentofte, Denmark Quest for the Holy Grail, Terrormolinos, Colour of Magic
Mark Paskin, 11 Wells Road, Penn, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV4 4BQ

Seabase Delta, Subsunk, Terrormolinos
Paul Langton, 21 Richmond Avenue, Litherland, Liverpool, L21 2PT



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FIREBIRD

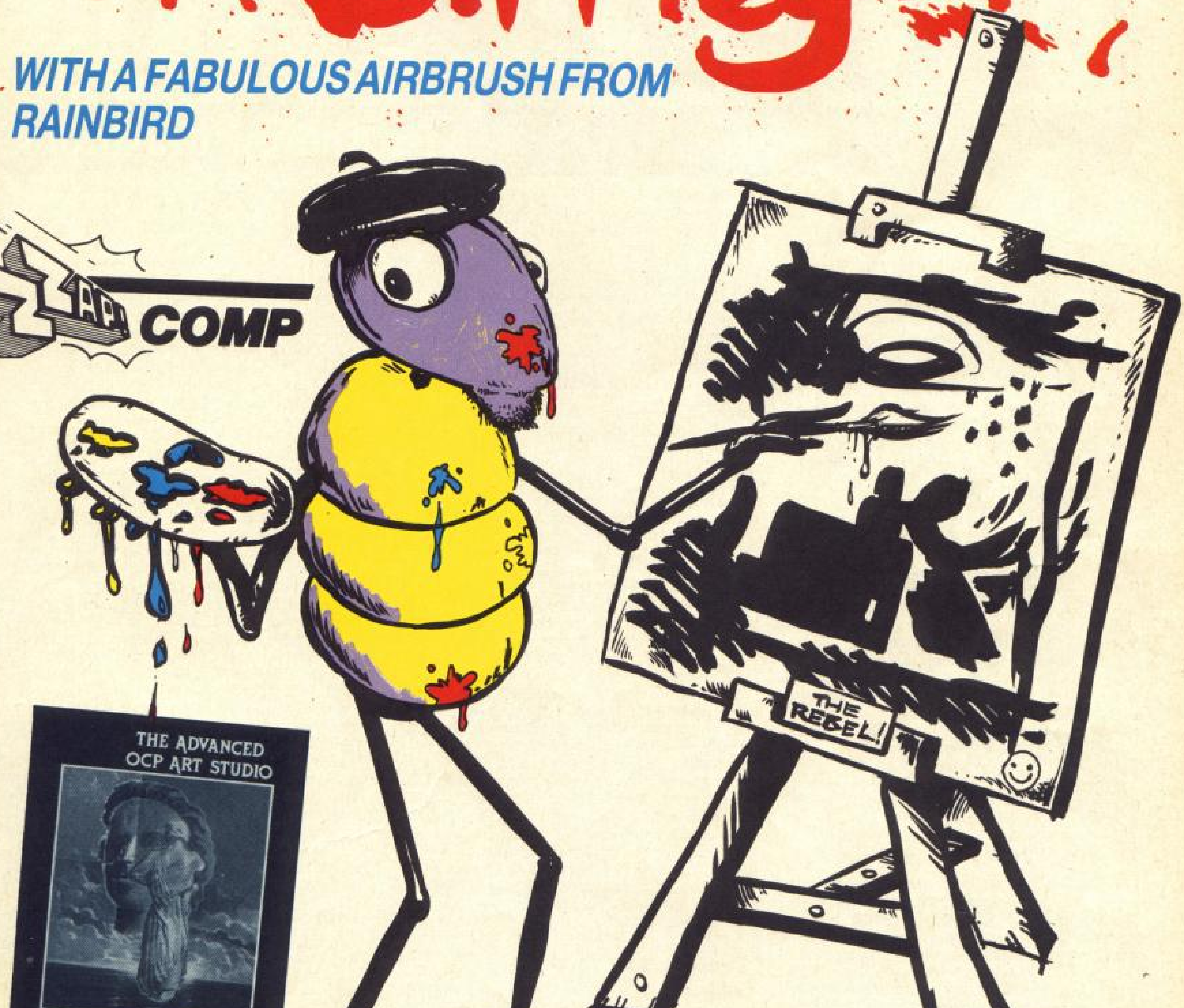
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Become the next Oli Frey?

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ZZAP! COMP



RAINBIRD

If you've just finished reading Steve's article on Rainbird's Advanced OCP Art Studio and thought, 'I'd really like one of those', then look no further – help is at hand. There are ten of these state-of-the-art utilities just waiting to be put in the post with your names on – and that's not all. Rainbird have graciously agreed to stump up the necessary dosh for a Badger airbrush complete with hose, three cans of propellant and a set of ten airbrushing inks to get you on your way. If you've ever fancied being the next Oliver Frey, Chris Foss or Tim White, then this could be the opportunity you've been waiting for!

All you need to do to win this fantastic set is to picture our cute and cuddly margin character Rockford in his art studio, busy at work. Put your ideas down on paper using paints, pencils, crayons, chisels and stones or any medium you feel happy with. The first prize of the airbrush set (plus a copy of the Advanced Art Studio) will go to the person, who in our opinion, creates the most humourous and imaginative scene.

Entries should be sent to: **I'VE GOT AN ARTISTIC BENT COMPETITION, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.**

Please remember to include your name and address (and telephone number if possible), and don't forget to indicate which version of the Advanced Art Studio you would like, cassette or disk. Entries should arrive no later than October the 8th, so you've got one month and counting . . . Bye!

MENTAL PROCREATION

By Andrew Braybrook

Tuesday July 14th

Drew some new sprites, including assorted meanies and the dreaded charge supervisor – who turned out to be a weird-looking thing altogether. The sprites that I'm doing will be one of two or maybe three interchangeable sets. I was going to have one set for the positive phase and one for the negative, but I may have room for a third set after all. The animation and colour information is fixed, so corresponding elements in each set must behave similarly.

The rejuvenators have turned out to be very slow at getting to the orbitals. I have speeded up their final approach but they occasionally get a little lost.

Wednesday July 15th

Re-organised the rejuvenators's method of getting to their targets, which fortunately simplified things considerably. They now don't necessarily head straight for their destination to start with, but when they get close they're usually already above it so their final approach is much quicker.

Drew a bunch of new sprites for some more assorted meanies and bullets and put in some more data to use them during play. I've made some adjustments to the ship's slowing down mechanism that kicks in when it's moving slowly with the joystick centred to bring it to a halt. Normally the ship will drift freely in frictionless space at high speed for any-directional movement, not just eight. The slowing down system is for accurate lining up on targets which are not moving.

Thursday July 16th

The smallest ship can currently carry two systems, both of which are fixed and indestructible: the energy display and the charge indicator. This leaves no room for expansion, which is partly desirable as the newcomer to the game won't have to worry about battling with the ship modification system, but partly annoying to anyone who wants to protect their ship a little. A bit of tinkering under the bonnet has seen this altered so you still start with the same two systems, but the charge indicator is now destructible and changeable – it can now be scrapped and replaced by another system.

Thought of a brilliant new system to incorporate, an emergency dematerialise system that kicks in if the energy drops below a certain level – effectively a safety valve. Following this idea through, I wondered what would happen if there was nothing that could be done to replenish the energy before the next visit to the play arena. Well, the system would just fire off again straight away. This would result in an infinite loop. Programmer's solution? The system must self-destruct when it has been used. The excuse? The system has to supply a large surge of power to activate quickly and burns itself out. Not bad, eh?

Friday July 17th

The rejuvenators are still getting lost sometimes. They always get where they're going if I follow them, and they also succeed if I wait by the nucleus and watch them come out at regular intervals. They don't work when they have to visit the opposite side of the Universe from me because the co-ordinate system wraps around, but not very consistently amongst all the various relative distances that are used to calculate the rejuvenator's current position. Result? Confusion, for me *and* the rejuvenators!

Monday July 20th

Managed to 'mend' the rejuvenators almost totally beyond repair as they couldn't find a tree in a pine forest this morning. I sneakily followed one and it got nearly to its destination and then hared off in the opposite direction. I'd decided to set fire to the C128 if the bug didn't come out by lunch-time. It was close too, and anyway, why does the compare instruction set the negative flag? Surely all you want to know is whether 'A' is equal to, less than, or greater than 'B', not whether the difference is positive or negative. All this means is that you can now say: 'Well, not only is 'A' greater than 'B', but actually it's buckets bigger.'

I also managed to find a well dug-in bug that had been there for ages. It was in the movement routine which is an area where things are difficult to trace as it's a dynamic thing, you can't just stop things and examine them as the whole movement over a long time is being controlled. Anyway I found it, and now the meanies are following proper patterns as instructed, which is quite impressive though I say so myself. I've come up with some more movement behaviour patterns including the infamous Uridium homing mines, and some pods that shoot out, perform aerobatics and then stop. If you hit them with a weak weapon they go absolutely bananas, firing bullets and lurching around.

Tuesday July 21st

Designed most of the rest of the sprites for the positive phase set leaving only eight to do. At this point I decided to create the negative phase set where there is a one-for-one correspondence between the two. Each sprite has two images, each meanie has two appearances. In some cases it may mean reflection, in others a reversal of animation, and others a total redraw. It took about two hours to get through them all. I'd still like to design a couple of extra roamers before I'm finished.

I hope to show the meanies developing during the game through the graphics and movements and also what they fire. Some early ones may not fire, but learn how to, some may home in very badly but get better at it, one will even try to impersonate a charge orbital towards the end (and maybe even other elements in the game).

All 256 images, which would normally take 16K were slowly and carefully compacted down to under 8K. I could even put in another 256 images if I were that way inclined, but I'll only do it if I can't think of a better use for the space, like a 10K bit-map test card, much more useful!

Wednesday July 22nd

Andrew Hewson paid us a visit today, so there wasn't much progress made on Morpheus – although I did write a brief storyline for background information and I also wrote down some interesting facts about the game, such as it has 2,403 sprites all on screen at the same time, 2,395 moving stars in the background in 452 parallax layers, 72,000 colours on screen at once, a full 68-piece orchestra playing during the game at CD quality, running simultaneously with a digitised after-dinner speech by the Pope.

Thursday July 23rd

Doesn't tempus fugit? Today saw the inclusion of the roamers into the game. Piece of cake really, it turned out that the standard meanie routines were quite capable of running them with no alterations so I just had to write an initiator. This carefully attempts to place roamers, wandering meanies or maybe rocks, roughly in the ship's path to give the impression that the place is full of them. Works too!

For an encore I also decided to put in the bonus sequence whereby as the requisite number of orbitals have been de-activated the nucleus decides to shut down so all the other orbitals collapse and you have to race back to the nucleus as it release spinning 'Morpheus Symbols'. These can be destroyed by any means, fair or foul, for extra bonus points. It releases one symbol for each orbital personally destroyed, so since on level one you only need to destroy one to unbalance the system then only one symbol will be released. Come level 32 the place will be full of Morpheus symbols around the nucleus, although they are very short-lived and expire in a few seconds.

Friday July 24th

Just tidied up yesterdays's routines. It sometimes counted the orbitals wrongly, but I soon found out why. It wasn't counting the ones that the rejuvenators killed by overloading them off-screen.

I drew the last eight sprites for each phase and tidied up some others . . . so that's the graphics about finished. It took BASIC six minutes to compact them to just under half size.

I've put in most of the meanie wave data just to try out most of the manual movement modes and check that the right meanies are coming out. There are about ten different types which begin fairly stupid in different ways and each develop through the game, learning how to fire, firing better weapons, attacking less clumsily or just becoming plain nasty.

Monday July 27th

Had one or two people look the game over and we decided on a few improvements, so the radar now has a cross-hair sight to make finding the orbitals a little easier, and I've shrunk the Universe a little too. This has the knock-on effect of requiring possibly two orbitals near the screen where one was previously the limit, deliberately. I thought this would be

a toughie as many other routines assume that only one orbital can be on or near the screen at a time. In the event it didn't turn out to be too much of a problem. Sometimes I even get the impression that I understand some of these routines.

I've tried out many of the levels and it's currently rather easy early on but it gets a lot more difficult at around level 12. I'll just have to shuffle the levels around until I get a good balance.

Tuesday July 28th

Couldn't face the thought of making up and keying in buckets of data for the meanie waves that get released, so I decided to let the routine make them up itself. I still ended up keying in a large table of data but it didn't require quite as much thought!

Made up all the data for the various systems that can be selected and bolted onto the ship, including their build-times, cost and efficiency. Some will be available early on and get phased out, others will be 'invented' later on.

I like to think that these reflect a real situation. As time passes the weapons and systems get better, and usually quicker to build, maybe cheaper, with pricing wars going on between the various manufacturing companies. I'd like to write a proper history of all this.

I've been playing the game to try out the difficulty level. It's fairly easy to clear the early levels without too much hassle. I tried out level 38 and didn't last long! I've changed the level completion condition so that a maximum of the orbitals need to be destroyed rather than all 32 of them which should speed up the whole pace of the game.

ST has been developing some sound effects on the C64 and driving himself mad under the headphones. Every now and again he lets me hear one through the TV speaker and the whole office shakes!

Wednesday July 29th

Found a couple of well-embedded bugs that were so crucial that they've gone totally unnoticed since about April. The title screen had only been displaying six sprites instead of eight, but since they're all on top of each other it's difficult to tell.

The supervisor concept is not required, the meanies are quite nasty enough on their own, so I seconded the graphics for it as another meanie type. I really need to think up some names for all the inhabitants. I want to call some little spinning rings 'Ubiques', (pronounced You-Be-Kway), because they get in everywhere – it's from the Latin you know.

Now the graphics and most of the level, weapon and system data is in. ST has nearly completed the sound effects, so we're almost done.

Thursday July 30th

Started putting in the sound and fine-tuning the game. This is the bit where we spend more time playing the game than coding anything, but it's probably the most important bit, getting the playability right.

Doubtless it won't be right for everybody but as long as some find it a little easy and others a little difficult then we've pitched it about right.

Allocating sounds to the part of the program that require them is always fun, sounds go off in the wrong places, for too long, or not at all. It's just a case of knocking it into shape.

Friday July 31st

ST has completed the sound effects and has now turned to the music. He's done some really low 'sub-sonic' sound effects that'll certainly shake the dust off you TV set.

I've improved the control mode considerably to allow easier switching between weapons and I've come up with another possibility, the rapid-fire weapon. Hope I have time to code that one up.

Monday August 3rd

Been playing the game over the week-end and two playability problems loomed. One is that the game failed to kill me off after a lengthy game, which is curable by increasing the slope difficulty to make it meaner in the later levels. The other is that the bullet-firing weapons are basically useless! They're too slow, with too few bullets requiring too much accuracy to hit anything, even the fastest firing guns aren't much good.

The limitations of the program are that eight bullets is tops, fairly small ones with consequently fine collision detection. Thus I've decided to scrap the lot! I've put in a more global systems whereby unseen bullets are fired. A flash of flame is seen coming from the gun that fired and all the collision detection is done behind the scenes. I can make the bullets as big and fast as I need to make the game work. This frees up a little more CPU time too.

Tuesday August 4th

A certain publisher (who shall remain nameless) moaned that the nucleus doesn't do a lot, it just sits there and throbs. It didn't take long to modify that. Now it spits out bullets at irregular intervals up to eight at a time. I've let it have up to 12 bullets on a C64, and 15 on a C128. It now looks menacing and is not a place to stay for a cup of tea. It reinforces the idea that the nucleus is the villain and must be destroyed but not by wading in there with all guns blazing.

I've made selected meanies more aggressive to start with and swapped over the homing mines so that the ones with a bit of random element in come later, as they're much harder to shoot than ones that home directly.

ST has completed the music, and unless I think of any more sound effects, they're all done too, all 53 of them.

Wednesday August 5th

Mostly a day of tuning up, and not playing pianos either. Found a few things that didn't, and never could, work. Again fairly subtle things that had gone un-noticed. It's fairly easy to spot a mistake once you know that something is definitely not working.

Made the meanies more trigger happy and I can't get past level 12 out of 50, so I'll probably back that down a little. I've removed part of the concept of extracting charge and ferrying it to the opposite phase to plaster the negative orbitals. This was making it necessary to transport back a little too often. Now charge extraction and consequent meanie release is not dependent on the shop having some room for charge, except that no points are awarded for extracting charge that cannot be carried so the wily player will till transport back to switch phase, but no-one is forced to do so.

Thursday August 6th

Went up to Hewson's with the new version of Morpheus to show them how to play it. It is virtually impossible to play without instructions, and I haven't written them yet because I may change my mind about anything. I've deliberately made it difficult to understand without instructions because the game has subtleties and complications that need a while to observe and explain. After all, if you'd never seen cricket before and were given a bat, ball and stumps would you get the rules right? I doubt it very much.

John Cumming and Dominic (designers and programmers of Zynaps) sit in on a think tank, and having understood a bit more of what was going on, started getting into the game. We then had a lengthy discussion about what the game is, and what it isn't. Ideas were put forward to improve it and the need for a detailed instructions manual was expressed, with screen shots to back up the text.

We also saw the advertising artwork for the first time in all its glory. It's very pretty with a gorgeous starfield.

Friday August 7th

I've made the larger ships a little cheaper and given all the systems and weapons a two-letter code to give them more indemnity. The control mode is still causing some arguments. At the moment it feels a little like Gribbly to control. The thing is that is has inertia and acceleration to make it feel like space, which requires more skill to control than simple inertia-less system. It's like comparing Asteroids to Space Invaders. Still, I've altered it slightly to give more accurate control. I've completely re-done the systems list to include a new ECM unit and to make the more useful systems available earlier.

Monday August 10th

Began work on a pre-game 'meet the meanies' sequence which means I now have to think of names for them all. I expect people will think of some of their own as well!

I think I need to award more points for later meanies to compensate for having to replace all the systems that they keep blowing up!

Just got the September ZZAP! and came across Andrew Johnson's Rrap. He mentioned the Atari St once too often for him not to own one. I was merely pointing out the technical differences between the Amiga and the ST for the benefit of those who are not sure, and to set the record straight in contradiction to another publication at the time saying that they are very similar. There's always one computer owner ready to rise to the bait though. All this, and Johnson (for we are apparently on surname terms) accuses me of telling porkies. Well, anyone with a colour TV can count the colours being scrolled on Goldrunner, one, two, three, four out of 16 which is what I'd call limited in colour. The other colours are sparsely added later for the ships and bullets. The main playing area on Metrocross has how many colours? Black, white, green and blue, I make that four again. You don't have to ask me, go and ask any honest ST programmers, I know I have.

Tuesday August 11th

Finished off the title sequence to show off the meanies, some with blank names because I haven't come up with many names yet. The limited area on the title screen coupled with the sprite multiplexor running means that the sprite positioning had to be pixel perfect to actually work properly, there's no room for any play in the vertical positioning at all, the sprites are just re-cycled in time.

Prepared a version to take to ZZAP! for a preview and headed for Ludlow at lunchtime.

Wednesday August 12th

The big day, I've still got some names to think of and a high score update routine to write which I think I can cope with along with some more minor tuning. It's hard to think that I started this project before Christmas. Since then we have installed the PCs for doing the editing and assembling on, downloading the code for testing on the C128. We thought it would speed things up, which it did, but it just allowed me to write a much larger and more complex program, about 30K of code compared to Uridium's 18K or Alleykat's 20K. All these games have used all the C64's memory, the rest of the space being taken up by graphics, data, variable areas and buffers. The ratio has just switched to more code meaning that I've had to compress the graphics more. There are still nearly 350 sprite images in Morpheus, more than Alleykat and Uridium put together.

Personally I'm pleased with the result, it does many of the things I had dreamed of at the beginning, some ideas as always fell by the wayside, to be replaced by new ideas along the way.

Although Morpheus has a definite arcade quality look which is a logical progression of everything I've done before, it's not a 'five minute quick-blast' game. It contains a large planning ahead element which is at least as important to master as the control mode. I think you'll find this a game that will be played over many months. This will be the final diary entry and the game can be seen publicly at the PCW show and should be on sale in October. Who will be the first to build and maintain a ship capable of reaching and destroying level 50? ▶

MORPHEUS

Hewson

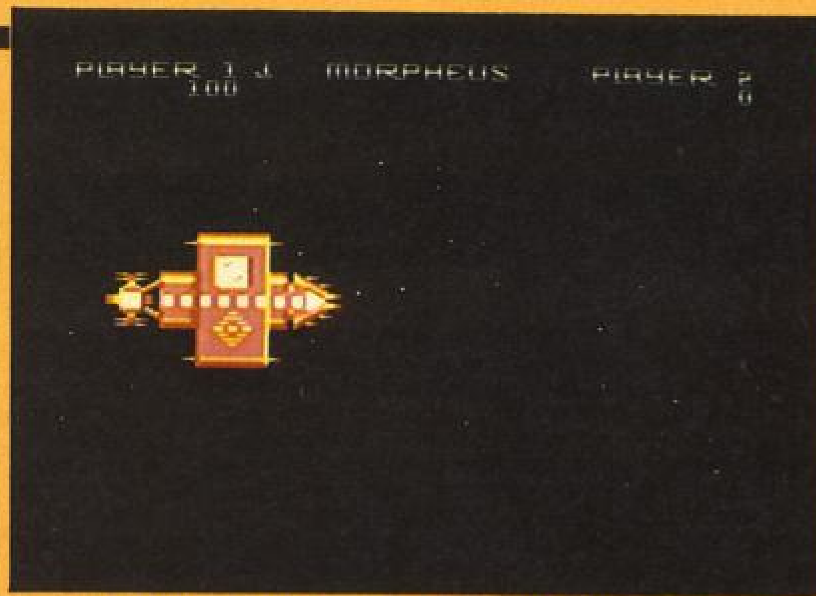
At long, long last, after seven months of development, Andrew Braybrook has completed *Morpheus*. If you've been following his trials and tribulations over the past seven months, then you should have some idea of the game's concept. If you haven't, then here's a rough idea of what *Morpheus* is about . . .

The player takes control of an expandable ship, entering 50 different multi-directionally scrolling space sectors to do battle with a wide variety of aliens. The objective is to seek out and destroy a suspended alien power network consisting of 'charge orbitals'. Destroying the required amount of orbitals (this amount corresponds to the level's number) results in the shutdown of the central controlling nucleus, making the area safe again and allowing the player to continue to the next sector.

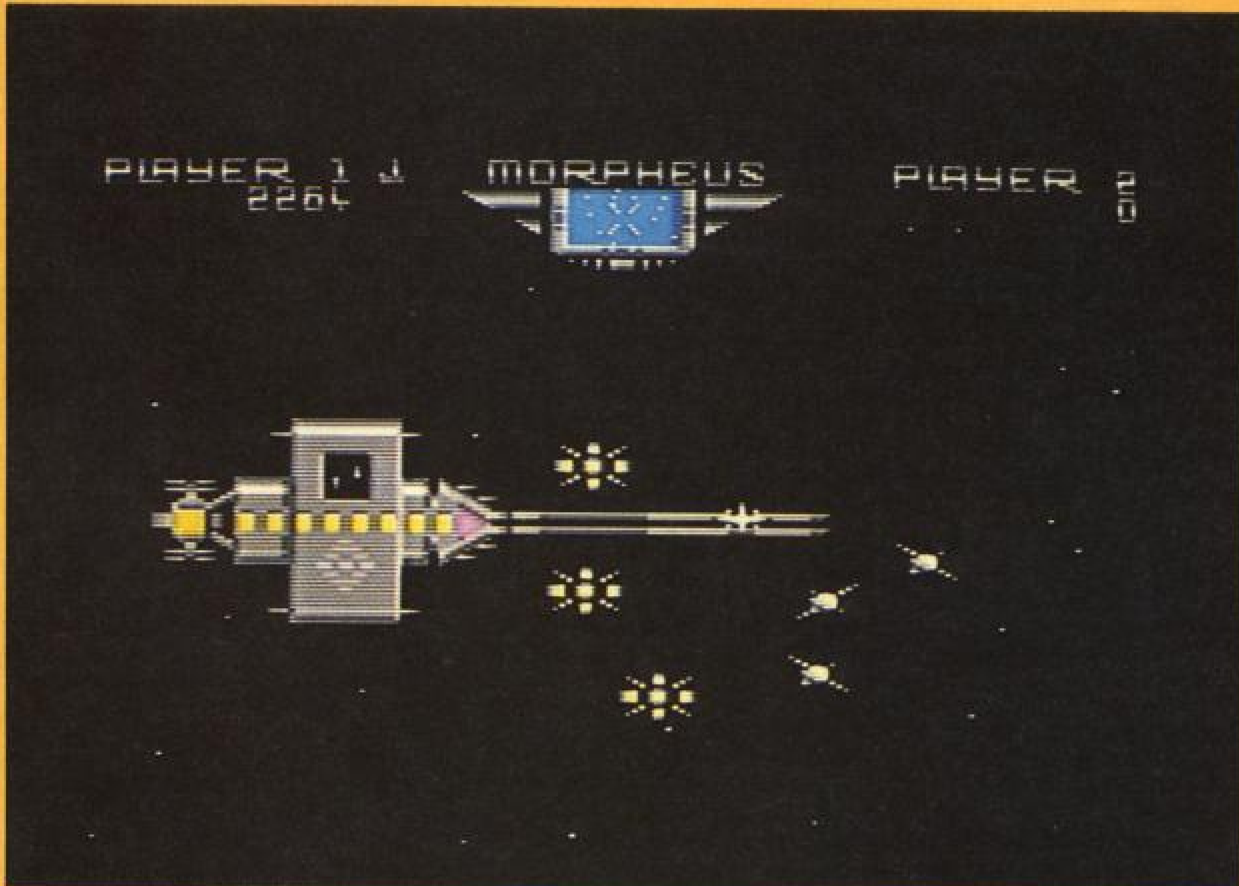
Naturally, there are alien ships guarding the network, and though these don't appear very aggressive at first – try wounding one of them and see how he reacts. As the game progresses, the aliens evolve and become more and more violent, and consequently capable of inflicting more damage on the ship.

Money is awarded for everything that is shot, and is saved and used to buy new, more modern ships or extra features for the current model. As higher levels are reached, it is essential that new machinery is bought, including shields, battery power-packs, inertia converters and other devices (both offensive and defensive), to maximize chances of survival.

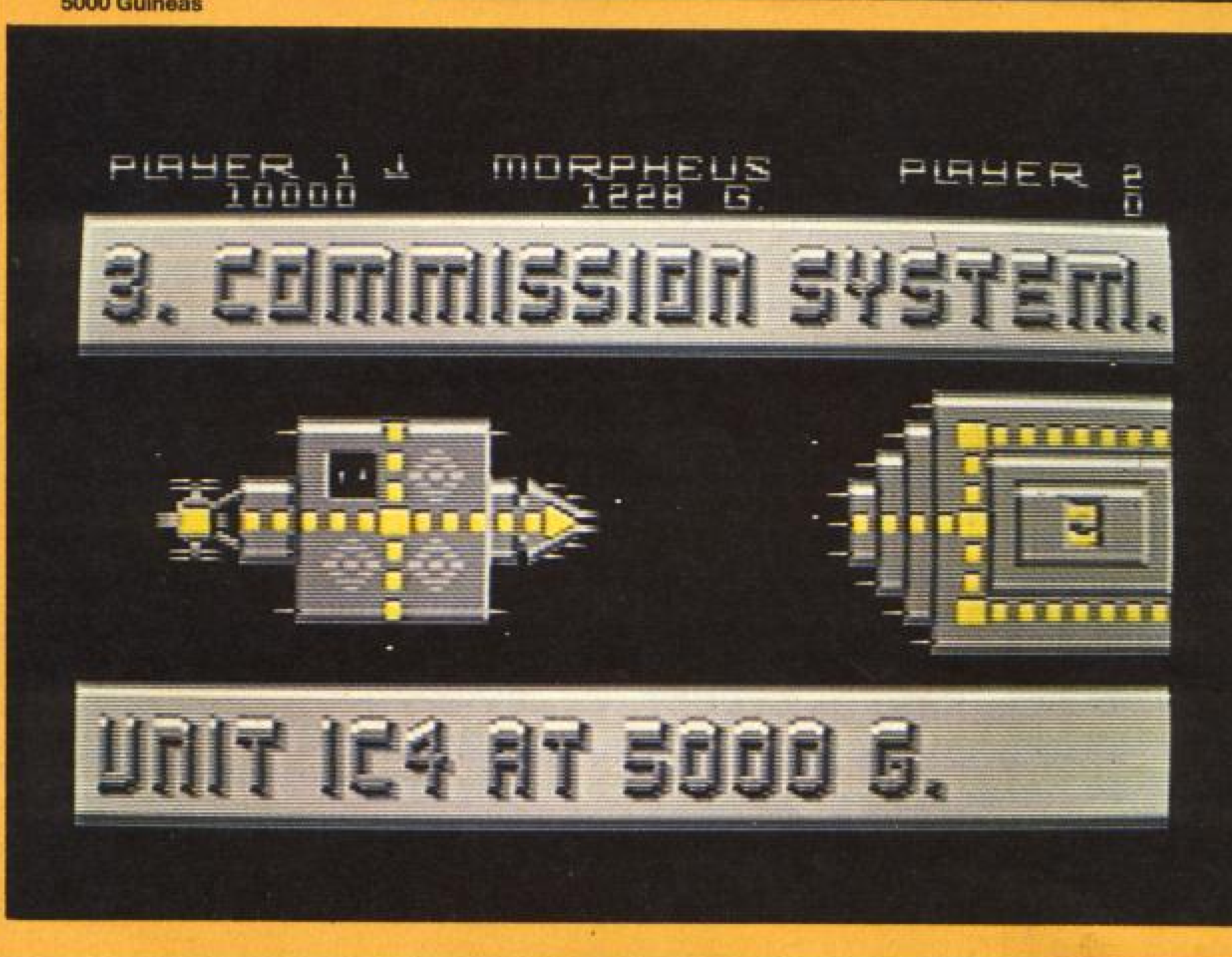
Unlike other 'progressive' shoot 'em ups (such as Nemesis and Zynaps) extra weaponry and features are not just added to the ship. What sets Morpheus apart is the fact that extra equipment has to be commissioned – not simply added when you pick up a credit or icon. Also, the extra features are 'bolted on' to the ship, which means you actually need room on the side of you vessel for extra weapons and peripherals. It's not just a matter of killing the aliens, collecting the money and buying weapons and systems at random.



► The basic, unmodified vessel just waiting to be customised with go-faster stripes and fluffy dice



► Using the giant tooth-paste weapon in Morpheus



► Commissioning the latest in weapons systems – a snip at 5000 Guineas

Morpheus has its own timescale – timeslices – and as time passes, the aliens become immune to older weapons. Therefore it is likely that a sensible player will progress further than one with quick reactions or an awesome fire rate.

The mission starts with the ship capable of carrying two devices, but if money is used wisely – and plenty of aliens are destroyed – an extremely large ship capable of carrying a wide variety of armament and features can gradually be purchased.

One nice feature is that the game automatically detects whether the machine it's being loaded into is a C128. If it is, an extra set of sprites are included into the gameplay.

Morpheus will be available in October, priced £8.95 on cassette, and £12.95 for the disk version. If you want more details, there'll be a full review next issue . . .



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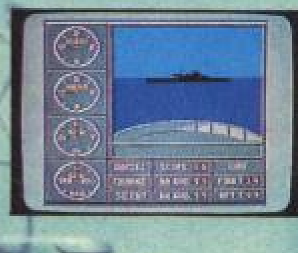
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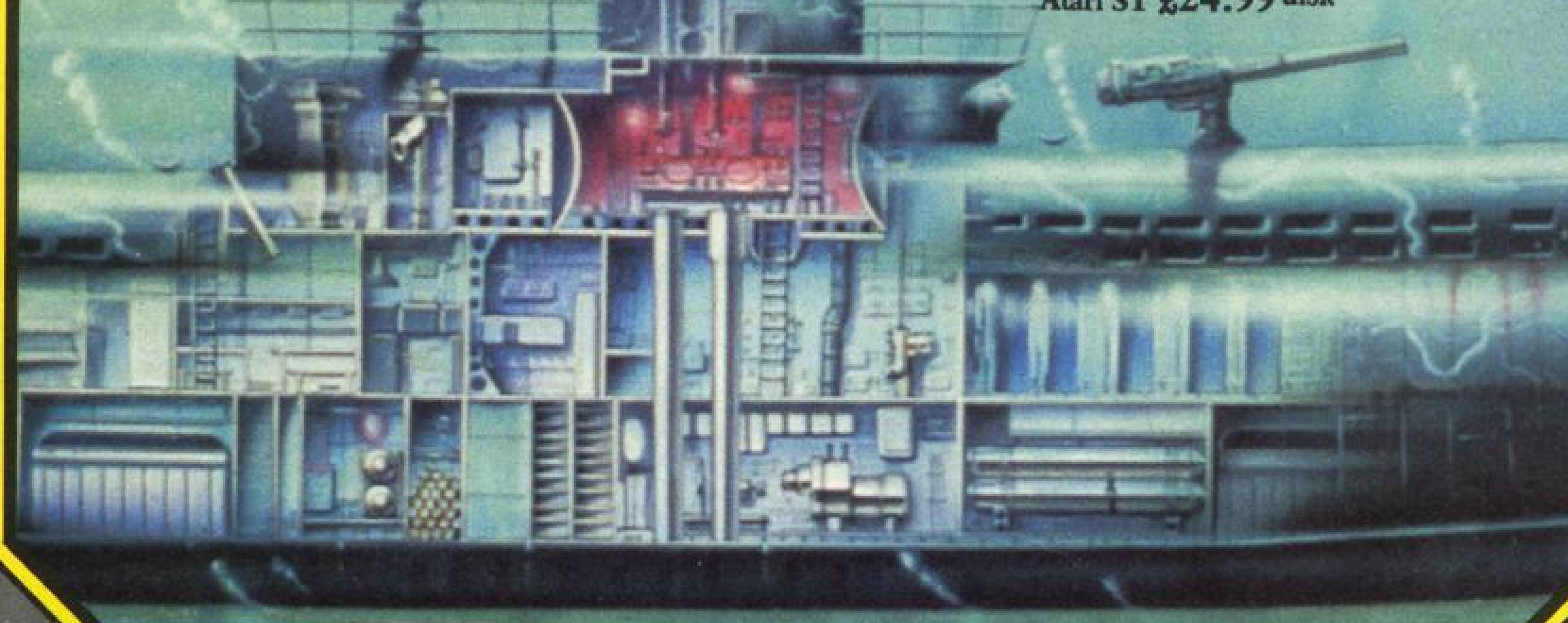
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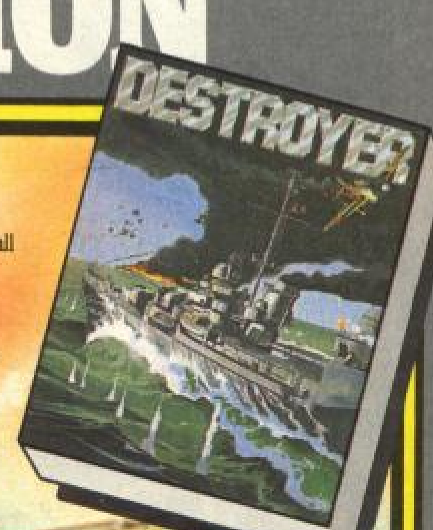


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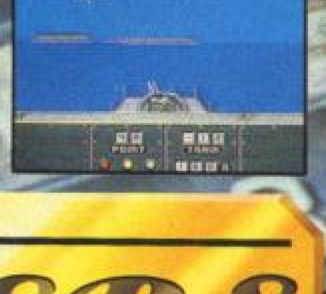
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WHAT'S New

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

The 10th Personal Computer World Show

This year's tenth anniversary PCW show looks like being the biggest (and busiest) yet. So, in an effort to make sense of the confusion of press releases, lies, rumours and malicious gossip, John Minson got on the phone to find out exactly who'll be doing what, when, where and how.

Okay, now I want you to listen and listen good. We're going out there soon . . . and some of us won't be coming back. So stick together and take my advice if you want to survive.

Yes, the PCW Show is once again upon us – those five days of fun, previews, and endless walking from stand to stand resulting in total exhaustion. If you're going to survive the crowds at London's Olympia between 25th and 27th September you'll need to remember the old boy scout motto and 'Be Prepared'.

I always reckon the best course is to have an idea of what you want to see before you enter the hall . . . and stand up whoever it was said 'Everything!' So, having nothing better to do one sunny afternoon I picked up my address book and let my fingers do the walking as I went talking to software houses.

First up were Ocean and Imagine, where I caught **Gary Bracey** in the middle of a minor panic. 'We've just got too much to show, this year,' he explained and proceeded to reel off a list of names.

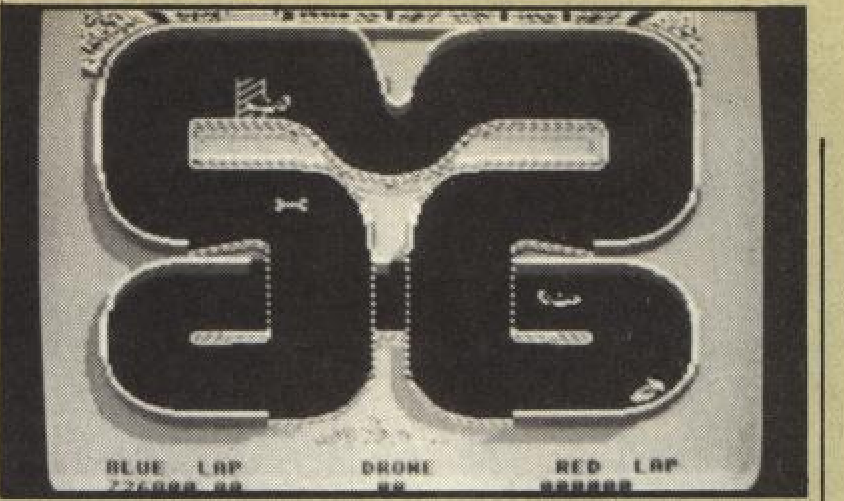
Ready for release at show time will be *Renegade, Athena, Freddy Hardest, Victory Road* and, at long last, *Tai Pan* which Gary enthuses has been well-worth the long wait.

But then you get into the previews and things really get going. There's Konami's *Gryzor* and Taito's *Rastan Saga*, plus Konami's *Combat School*, a *Hyper Sports* variation featuring the sort of assault course you need to train for PCW.

Dinamic scores again with *Basket Master* basketball, complete with slow motion replays, and *Athena*'s sequel, *Psycho Soldier* should also be on show. *Platoon* is the major movie tie-in; *Phantys* is sci-fi 'with great graphics'; *Matchday II* kicks off courtesy of **John Ritman**; and Denton take us to *Where Time Stood Still*, a *Great Escape* style game with dinosaurs and jungles.

'And,' said Gary, panting for breath, 'there'll be lots of other surprises!' How does he intend to survive all that I wondered. 'I've got my giant pack of valium already,' he laughed. 'But seriously, it's a tremendous chance to meet the public.

'And please put that we're looking for good programmers and artists, so if they want to come to the stand and ask for me, I'd be delighted to speak to them.'



► **Activision's new arcade conversion, *Superspring* is looking good. More details are available on their stand**

SOMETHING SPECIAL

Could anyone match that, I wondered. Well it looks like Activision will be having a go with not one but two stands. Electric Dreams display will be 'Something special,' according to Mr Ambassador and all-round flat-top **Andrew Wright**. He wouldn't say more, but it's designed around the motor-racing theme, to celebrate *Super Hang-On* and *Championship Sprint*.

Meanwhile Activision themselves are going for saturation coverage in a hi-tech setting as they bring you big Arnold Ham'n'egger's latest, *Predator*. They hope to have a game preview plus clips from the movie – at least if they can find some that won't make you replay your Olympia burger!

Knightmare is their other great tie-in, this time with the Anglia TV adventure game show which promises to be the smash of the season. Traditional adventurers will delight in two new Infocom titles though. *Beyond Zork* uses a novel method of control, while *Plundered Hearts*, by **Amy Briggs**, is the company's first girlie story, in which you play a female. But don't think that they've gone soft . . . male play-testers reckon it could be the company's best ever!

System 3 kick you where it hurts with the Thai Boxing simulation, *Bangkok Nights*, while Abstract Concepts have found their concepts becoming strangely solid – the Gulf War they suggested in *Mindfighter* has all come true! Real monster bashers will be on the *Rampage* with the coin-op conversion of the same name.

And Andy's PCW comment. 'I love it. It's a chance to get completely bonzo-ed (What can he mean?) and meet people.' But isn't he worried about being mobbed by millions of fans and admirers? 'No, I'm disguising myself with a new designer haircut.'

DEODORANT

After all this heavy duty action there's to be some peace somewhere – right? Wrong! At least not at Gremlin where it will be 'all go' according to **Sue Quinn**, who recommends, 'Comfy shoes, plenty of deodorant and plenty of drink,' then adds: 'We really do look forward to it.'

Their stand features football action in *Gary Lineker's Superstar Soccer*, which combines strategy and arcade sections as you select the team and the tactics before taking to the field as a goal scoring centre forward.

Mask II sees the return of Matt Tracker with four missions to solve, while *Basil, the Great Mouse Detective* is a tie-in with the Disney cartoon. Basil and Rattigan will be attending the show, 'in the fur', says Sue.

Blood Valley won't be released 'til November, but you'll be able to preview this fantasy adventure, based on the Duel Master series of books, two months early. *Games Compendium* stays closer to home and takes a whacked-out look at traditional amusements such as Snaked and Ladders – with real snakes!

Alternative World Games gives sport a similar silly slant by adding such activities as welly throwing. Not one for butch guys like *The Masters of the Universe*. Gremlin has the tie-in rights to the live action movie, released around Christmas. Add to that an appearance by Greglon the ►



▶ **Parachuting deep behind enemy lines and undertaking solo infiltration and commando combat missions are both part and parcel of *Airborne Ranger*, from Microprose**

Gremlin, and it's going to be a fiendish show.

WEREWOLVES

Surely that model of calm and composure, the enchanting **Mandy Barry** of Ariolasoft, has a hint for PCW survivalists. 'I can't wait for it,' she shouts, but is that a hint of sarcasm I detect? Anyhow, her hint is 'Keep p*ss*d most of the time.' Quite what you do if you're too young to get served (or can't get a second mortgage to buy a drink at Olympia prices), I'm not sure.

Drink enough and you could be seeing werewolves. But don't call The Sun because they're Ariolasoft's *Werewolves of London*, making an early appearance in preparation for their November release. Programmers are Viz, who designed *Bride of Frankenstein*.

Star Fox is a Reaktor game, which will be playable at the show, while you'll be able to sneak-preview Starlight's *Red LED*, which promises to be a big hit (see review on page 18). *Bushido Warrior* is another PCW-time release from Reaktor, this time it's a combat game which lets you choose your champion.

ENTERTAINMENT

The Mirrorsoft crew are obviously masochists – they're taking two stands! But maybe there's method in their madness, because one is hidden away in the relative calm of the Business Hall, where the only screams come from accountants as their spreadsheets tell them they're bankrupt.

But it's the entertainment area we all care about, isn't it, so I got **Pat Bitton** to spill the secrets. With five labels under the Mirrorsoft umbrella, they'll be relying on a video display rather than a handful of computers so that everybody gets to see the action.

Mean Streak, an October release, is set in the 23rd Century when the M25 is a refuge for rebel bikers who chase around its rubbish-strewn surface (sounds like nothing's changed, then!). You play a pleasure seeking motor cyclist, challenging the rebels in this one or two player game.

Zig-Zag is a new **Tony Crowther** title, based on a **David Bishop** design – while looking ahead to Christmas there'll be screens from *Andy Capp*. The idea of this arcade adventure featuring the lovable (?) layabout is to survive a week on the dole. I reckon they should send copies to the cabinet to teach them a thing or two!

In the Mindscape area there'll be the simply stupendous *Defender of the Crown*, which has turned into the top-selling C64 disk ever, and should be available on tape soon, if all goes well. There should also be a demonstration of *Sinbad*, from Master Designer Software of California.

Back home there's *Fortress America* from PSS which takes a different approach to SDI, and there should also be an announcement about a deal with yet another American company, though Pat couldn't mention any names as the contracts aren't yet signed.

So is Pat looking forward to the show. 'Do I have to answer that?' she asked, sounding alarmed. She did admit that this year, as Press and Publicity Director, she hopes to have a slightly more relaxed time than in the past, when her duties have been far more diverse.

All those American titles made me think of another Trans-Atlantic company, so I got straight on the red telephone to Microprose, rumoured to be the world's only software producer with a hot-line to the Pentagon!

Stewart Bell told me that **Major 'Wild Bill' Stealey** will be jetting in from the States to sign autographs and chat with the public. This at least, guarantees that their stand will be larger than life.

HELICOPTER

He's already had his troops in training, according to Stewart, with a pre-show warm up of baseball and hot-air ballooning (!). Stewart's own training programme, based around his bike, which he used to ride for sport, was less successful – he backed his car over it and mangled the wheels!

Enough of the gossip though. The pride of the Microprose stand will be a full-scale helicopter simulator – three tons of the right stuff, as used to train the military. But Stewart had to add that it won't be open season to play with it – they just can't let everybody loose on a piece of machinery which cost £25,000 merely to fly over here!

What you will be able to see is *Project Stealth*, a simulation of the new undetectable American plane (motto, 'Keep it healthy – stay stealthy') which is so top secret the top brass won't admit that it exists! Still, Major Bill should know what he's talking about, and Stewart says it was all cleared through the Pentagon. Expect therefore to see lots of people wearing fur hats and talking with Russian accents crowding to get a look!

Microprose's other line of attack will be a topic they were told they could never simulate . . . personal commando combat. But they've proved everyone wrong with *Airborne Ranger*, which combines arcade and simulation factors to produce the game that *Commando* should have been, Stewart promises.

After all this blood 'n' guts aggression you really will be needing an island of calm and where else but in the company of the urbane **Dominic Wheatley** and **Mark Strachan**, better known as Domark. After all, if Mark can sincerely say, 'I can't wait. I love the show. I thoroughly enjoy it', he must be a Zen master!

After concentrating on just one product last year, *Trivial Pursuit*, Domark is spreading itself wider this time. *Not A Penny More, Not A Penny Less* isn't a simulation of dealing with greedy programmers, but the title of a **Jeffrey Archer** book, the rights to which Domark have just bought. The author will be on the stand – though only on the first trade day, so you won't be able to ask him for tips on how to write a best-seller!

Star Wars, the game of the arcade machine of the film, will be previewed, and James Bond will be thrilling *The Living Daylights* out of everyone. Domark will complete its stand with the Macsen TV titles, which they're relaunching.

Now you can take part in *Blockbusters* (I'll have a P, please Bob), which has been completely reprogrammed, plus *Countdown* and *Bullseye*. Sadly, *Treasure Hunt* doesn't include a digitised Anneka Rice, but October will see a computerised *Krypton Factor* for fans of the long running test of mind and body.

Hewson is another of the more sane software companies, so sit back at their stand and enjoy the age of steam in *Southern Belle*'s sequel, *Evening Star* (see review on page 93). And if that isn't maybe a trifle too calm there's always **Andrew Braybrook**'s great newie, *Morpheus*, a complex shoot 'em up which puts you in control of one of the dreadnoughts you were trying to destroy in *Uridium!* There's a sneak preview of this potential blockbuster following the last part of Andrew's programmer's diary on page 52 of this very mag.

Also on the stand will be *Magnatron* (sequel to *Quazatron*) and *Nebulous*, the newcomer from John Phillips, a puzzle game set on towers above the sea which revolve, with extremely attractive graphics, according to **Andrew Hewson**. It's a completely surreal, creative environment, so check it out!

PCW will mark the debut of the budget Rack-It range too, a selection which combines Hewson quality with a £2.99 price tag. High spots include *Anarchy*, a puzzle shoot 'em up, and *Sunburst*, in which you get to blow up whole galaxies.

So what does Andrew make of the prospect of yet another PCW show for one of the industry's veterans? 'It's hugely enjoyable and it's a huge amount of hard work. You don't get one without the other', he says, speaking with the voice of experience.

Rack-It will also be appearing on the Mastertronic stand – the budget kings are handling distribution. There you'll also find MAD, Ricochet and all the other £1.99 and £2.99 regulars.

RELAUNCH

But the real excitement, according to **Sharon Wade**, will be the launch of Arcadia, the coin-op machines that contain Amiga boards. Then there'll be the Sega system, with a chance to win a console. And to top it all Melbourne House, another PCW regular, will be getting a relaunch to thrust it back into the public eye.

Sharon's taking her pre-show preparation seriously too – 'Jogging every morning at 6.30, a three-month diet of bran cookies and lots of fresh orange juice.' She could be the only person standing at the end of the ordeal – if she has any strength left after all that exercise!

Palace has a new label to announce at the show as well. Outlaw Productions will debut with the *Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit* (Preview on page 124), which lets you have a say in what sort of aliens you're going to waste.

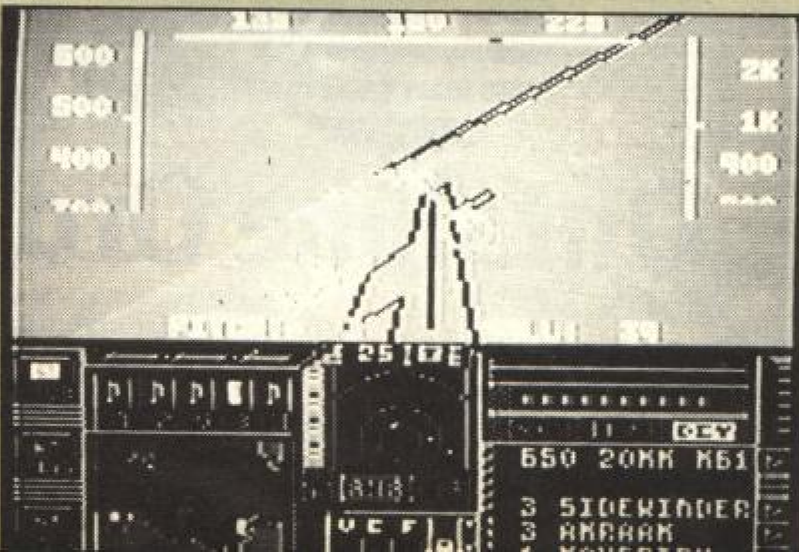
On the parent label there's *Starship*, initially on the ST but to reach the C64 eventually. It's a strategy/action game with filled-in 3D wire frame graphics according to king of the Palace, **Pete Stone**.

Pete's advice on surviving PCW is simple though – 'Stay away!' But if you can't he suggests, 'Voice training so you can shout louder than anyone else. I always have a sore throat after the first day!'

HOSPITALITY

I'm beginning to think that his first advice is fairly accurate when at last the Liverpudlians of Software Projects come to my rescue. Now solely a publishing company for other people's programs, **Gary Miller** promises me that they're going to have a large, peaceful hospitality lounge

▶ **The new Microprose flight simulation, *Project: Stealth Fighter* is about a plane so secret, that even the US Airforce deny its existence!**



for members of the press – and that it will be well-stocked with drink.

Outside though it will be *Hysteria*, which just happens to be the name of their new release from Special Effects, a new team led by **Paul Finnegan**, who was formerly with Ocean.

In fact there are several names previously associated with the Manchester giant behind this parallax scrolling arcade/strategy shoot 'em up, which sets you against a fanatical sect who have been changing our future by messing around with the past. Gary reckons the best way to beat the PCW-syndrome will be to head straight to their stand.

There are sure to be goodies from Telecomsoft's assorted labels – Firebird (who have titles such as *Bubble Bobble* on the way), and Rainbird. Softek is springing into life with the Ace label for arcade conversions and originals. And what of Electronic Arts, newly over here from the States? We'll have to wait and see.

Whatever happens, you can be sure that PCW will be as tiring as ever – but also as unmissable! I'm sure you wouldn't like it if I told you about absolutely everything that you could see – after all, discovering the Christmas hits is half the fun.

By now I'm feeling like I've spent five days in the Olympia as it is . . . and God knows what my phone bill will be. So apologies to everyone who's been omitted from the round up.

SECRECY

There is one company who wouldn't tell me anything though. When I phoned US Gold, the Midlands giant would only tell me that they were making a press announcement next week. But, I explained, my deadline was on Friday, so if they didn't want to miss out they'd have to at least give me a hint.

Still no go. US Gold is more secretive than the government is over Spy Catcher. But they did add that they'd had several people complain that this would cause problems with their deadlines. I refrained from pointing out that this could mean that their announcement was a bit late and rang off.

But I must make mention of one more stand. Don't, whatever you do, miss our very own Newsfield village. It may not be quite on the scale of Atari or Commodore's, but it will star all your favourite staff and should be jam-packed with goodies.

Among them will be our very own launch . . . The Games Machine, and if you know what's good for you, you won't miss out on the premier issue (destined to become a collector's item) of the def new computer mag – editor **Graeme Kidd** may just be wearing his DMs and giving you the hard sell if you do!

As for me, I'll be hanging around the stand, but if you don't see me there keep an eye out as you wander around the show. And if you see a bedraggled figure wearing a loud shirt and mirror shades, talking to himself, treat me gently – I probably only need another drink!

JOHN MINSON



► **Out in October costing £4.50, the first of four Judge Anderson and Judge Death books from Titan, setting the scene for Piranha's game**

► **First of the Judge Dredd Chronicles (1981) featured Judge Death on the cover**



FACE TO FACE WITH FEAR!





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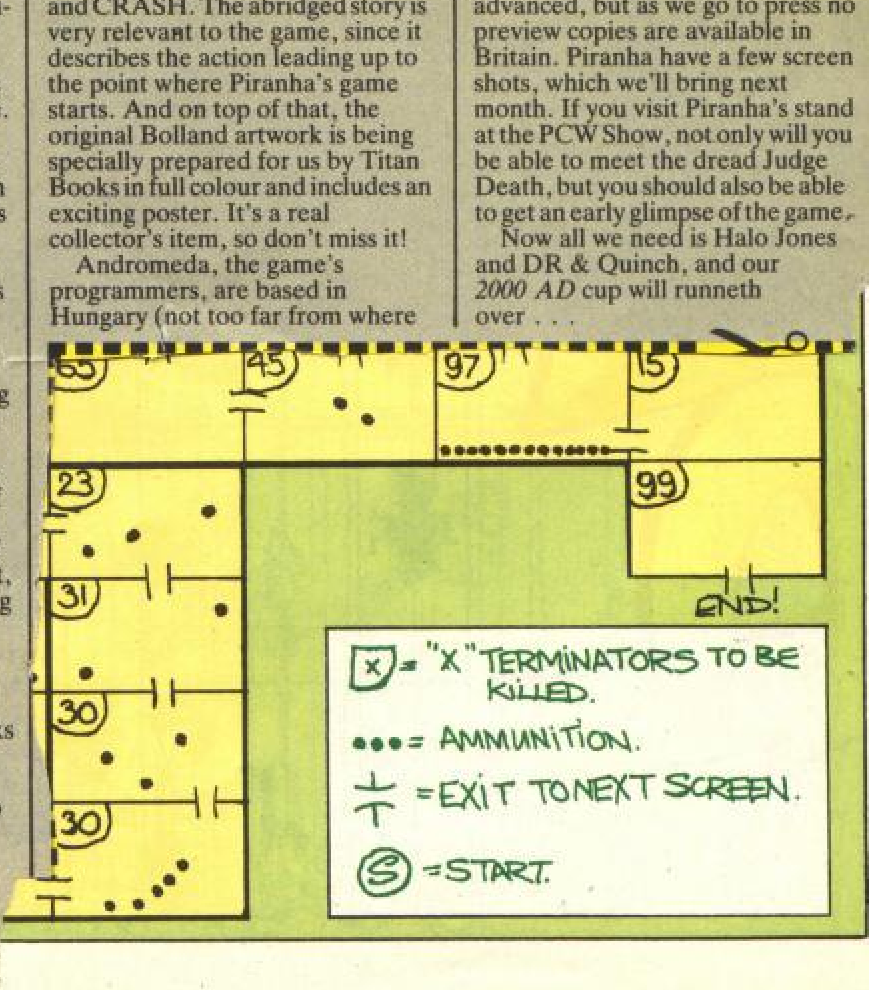
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It wasn't the end though, such super-heroics were rewarded by her being revived – and Judge Death too. In October Titan Books are publishing the first of four Judge Anderson albums, timing which fits well with the lead up to the release of Piranha's *Judge Death* game.

To celebrate *Judge Death* the December ZZAP! (Issue 32, on sale 12 November) will include an extra 16-page Judge Death pull-out supplement, exclusive to ZZAP! and CRASH. The abridged story is very relevant to the game, since it describes the action leading up to the point where Piranha's game starts. And on top of that, the original Bolland artwork is being specially prepared for us by Titan Books in full colour and includes an exciting poster. It's a real collector's item, so don't miss it!

Andromeda, the game's programmers, are based in Hungary (not too far from where another famous member of the undead struck out for fame and fresh blood). Currently, the Commodore 64 version is most advanced, but as we go to press no preview copies are available in Britain. Piranha have a few screen shots, which we'll bring next month. If you visit Piranha's stand at the PCW Show, not only will you be able to meet the dread Judge Death, but you should also be able to get an early glimpse of the game.

Now all we need is Halo Jones and DR & Quinch, and our *2000 AD* cup will runneth over . . .



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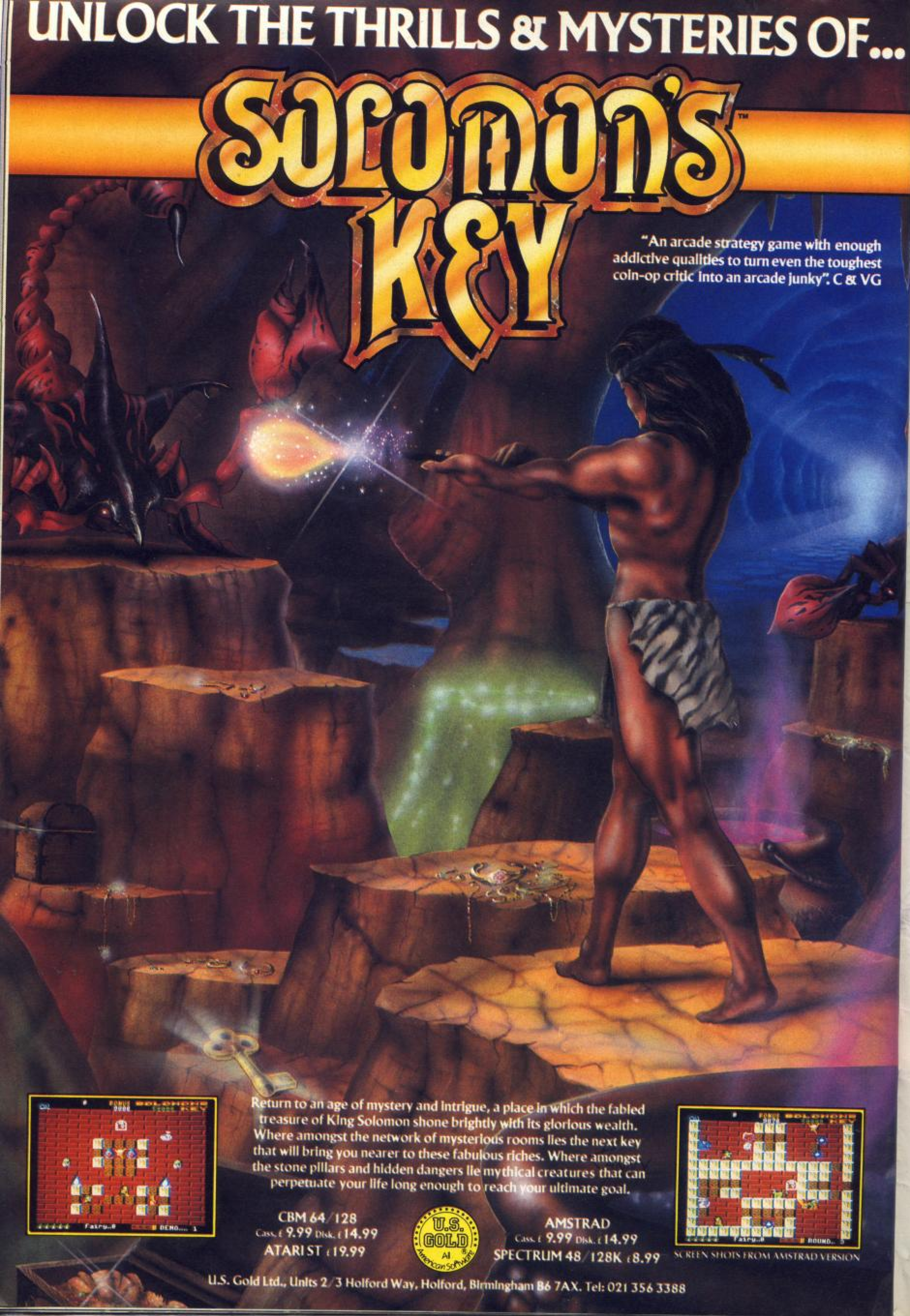
Now all we need is Halo Jones and DR & Quinch, and our *2000 AD* cup will runneth over . . .

ZZAP! Personal Computer Show

50p OFF PCW SHOW ENTRY

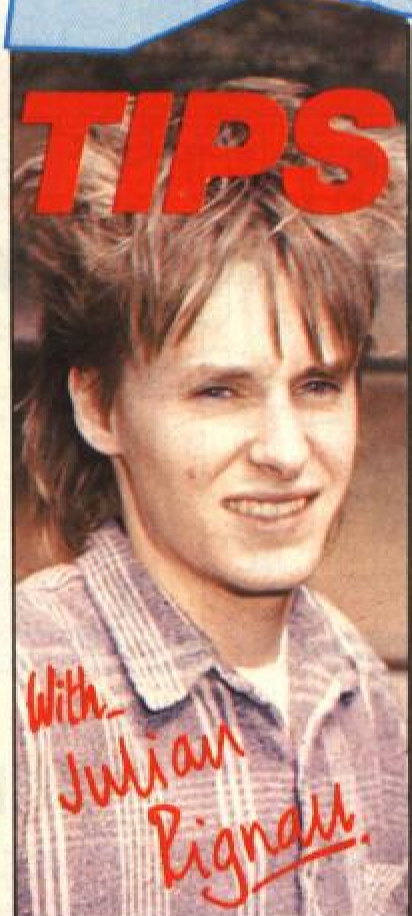
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SCREEN SHOTS FROM AMSTRAD VERSION
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ZAP! TIPS



The reason why the tips are a little shorter than usual this month is because there's a lull before a tornado.

Cue fanfare and drum roll . . .

Because next month's tips section is going to be an amazing

32 PAGE PULL-OUT SPECIAL

Absolutely packed to the gills with ace tips for games old and new, complete with maps, classic listings, requests (you see, it was worth writing in), reprints from early issues and some pretty unusual stuff.

Interested?

Also, there's going to be an incredible POKEs encyclopaedia which spans the entire history of Commodore games. It's not quite finished yet, so if you have some unlimited lives RESET POKEs for old or new games, send them in immediately so they can be included.

Convinced yet?

If not, get a load of this!

It'll all be in glorious 3D. Yes, you've seen the movies, read the books and played the games – now utilise the world's first ever 3D tips section. Fabulous, eh?

Until then, you can make do with this little lot . . .

CHUCKIE EGG II (A 'n' F)

At long, long last! Following numerous requests, here are tips for Chuckie Egg II**, the game that's had some of you tearing your hair out and foaming at the mouth.**

Mrs Baron, **Bushey Heath, Hertfordshire has achieved a score of 20,941,800 and has decided to share her profound knowledge of the game's workings.**

Mrs Baron also mentions that she recently spoke to someone who used to work for A 'n' F, and was told that the game cannot be completed because an infinite number of eggs have to be made . . . what a stinker! However, the following tips should be of help to those who are still stuck.

Before any items are collected, make sure that the Generator is on and working. When the generator is ticking over, the train moves along, allowing Chuckie to go above the railway line. Walk up the chain where the train used to be, travel five screens to the right by pressing the up and right keys until you see a ladder in the top right hand corner of the screen. Climb it and continue.

If Chuckie can't go above the line and is forced left as he enters the 'Beware of the Chocolate Monster' screen, your tape has a bug and no further progress can be made. Mrs Baron spent a year complaining loudly to A 'n' F, who finally sent her a new copy. Continue if you're lucky enough to be able to. Collect milk, sugar and cocoa and deposit them in their respective vats – then make the toy. If Chuckie deposits this after collecting it, it automatically becomes incorporated in the egg. Take the egg to despatch and you've just about finished your task – all you have left to do is make an infinite amount of eggs.

NEMESIS THE WARLOCK (Martech)

Okay all you deviants. If you're having trouble despatching the vile Terminators, drop your blades and guns for the moment and listen to the advice sent in by ace hacker and slayer, Dean Jackson **of** Swanley, Kent. **Use his tips in conjunction with the map and you should be able to add a few more kills to your tally. And don't forget – be pure, be vigilant and kick ass.**

GENERAL HINTS

Once of the most important things to remember is that when Nemesis stands on a platform his head protrudes through the one above. Therefore Terminators walking above him drain his lifeforce as quickly as if they were walking right through him. Duck if there's a Terminator above, and jump if there's one lurking about on a lower platform.

The edges of the screen are usually safe, so wait for the Terminators to approach before blasting them. When Nemesis is doing this, watch out for those sneaky little chaps who jump from their platforms onto his head.

Avoid killing Terminators near ammo, because more often than not the body lands on the ammo pod and prevents Nemesis from picking it up.

Terminators can't be shot at close range, so don't waste ammo attempting to kill them with a gun. Run them though with a sword and less life force is lost.

Avoid zombies at all costs and don't forget that they take four shots to kill.

Only use acid on zombies, or if Nemesis is close to death – remember that there's a maximum of two acid gobs per screen.

Always keep a check on the number of Terminators left to shoot on each screen (the number on the bottom left). When there are five or six left to shoot, move towards the exit (marked on the map) in order to avoid having to rush when the number reads zero. Failure to reach the exit in time has fatal consequences.

SPECIFIC TIPS

Screen Four – Shoot a Terminator so that its body lands on the middle platform, allowing Nemesis to use it to step his way out.

Screen Six – The way out is down. Shoot enough Terminators *before* falling into the pit.

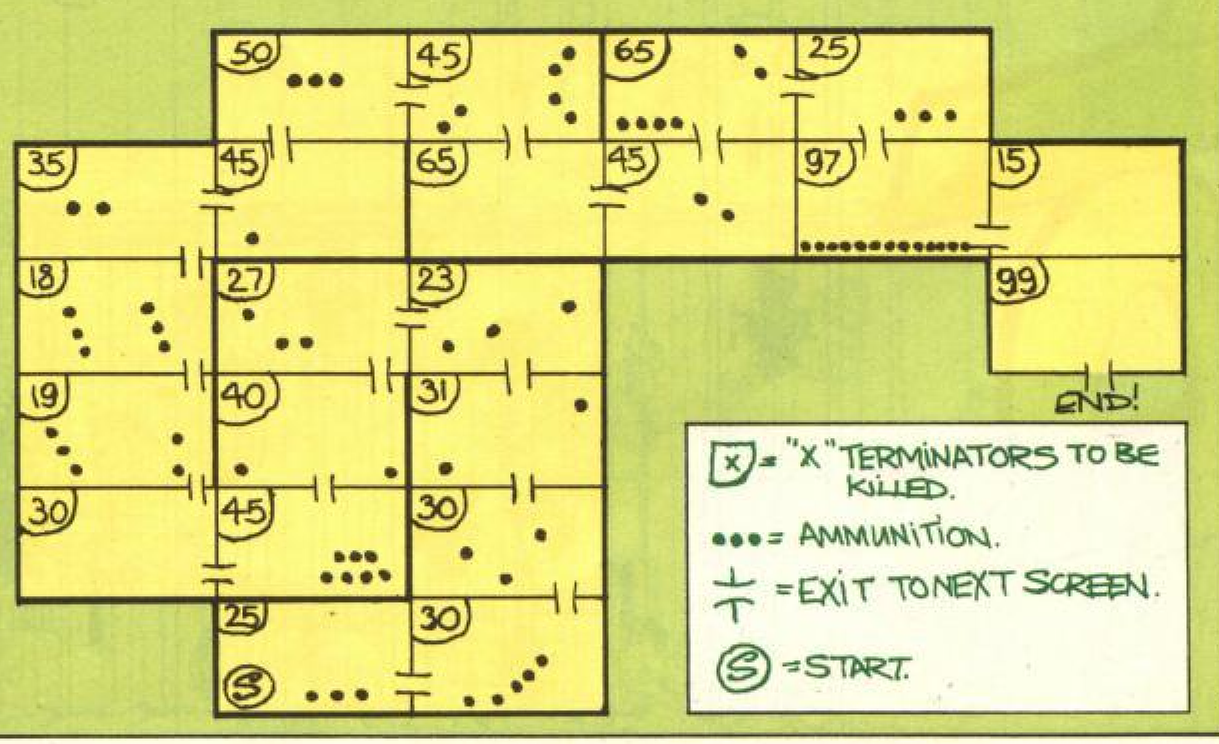
Screen Seven – This one takes quite a while to complete. Fall down the gap and guide Nemesis left or right before he lands. Shoot Terminators as they fall through the gap. It is possible to build a bridge of bodies in order to reach the ammo.

Screen Nine – Build a pile of bodies on the right hand side of the screen so that Nemesis can climb to the exit at the top right.

Screen Eleven – Shoot Terminators in the back and they fall on the platform creating a bridge so that Nemesis can climb to the top.

Screen Thirteen – Unlucky for Terminators this one! Pile bodies on the left hand side of the screen and walk over them to the exit at top left.

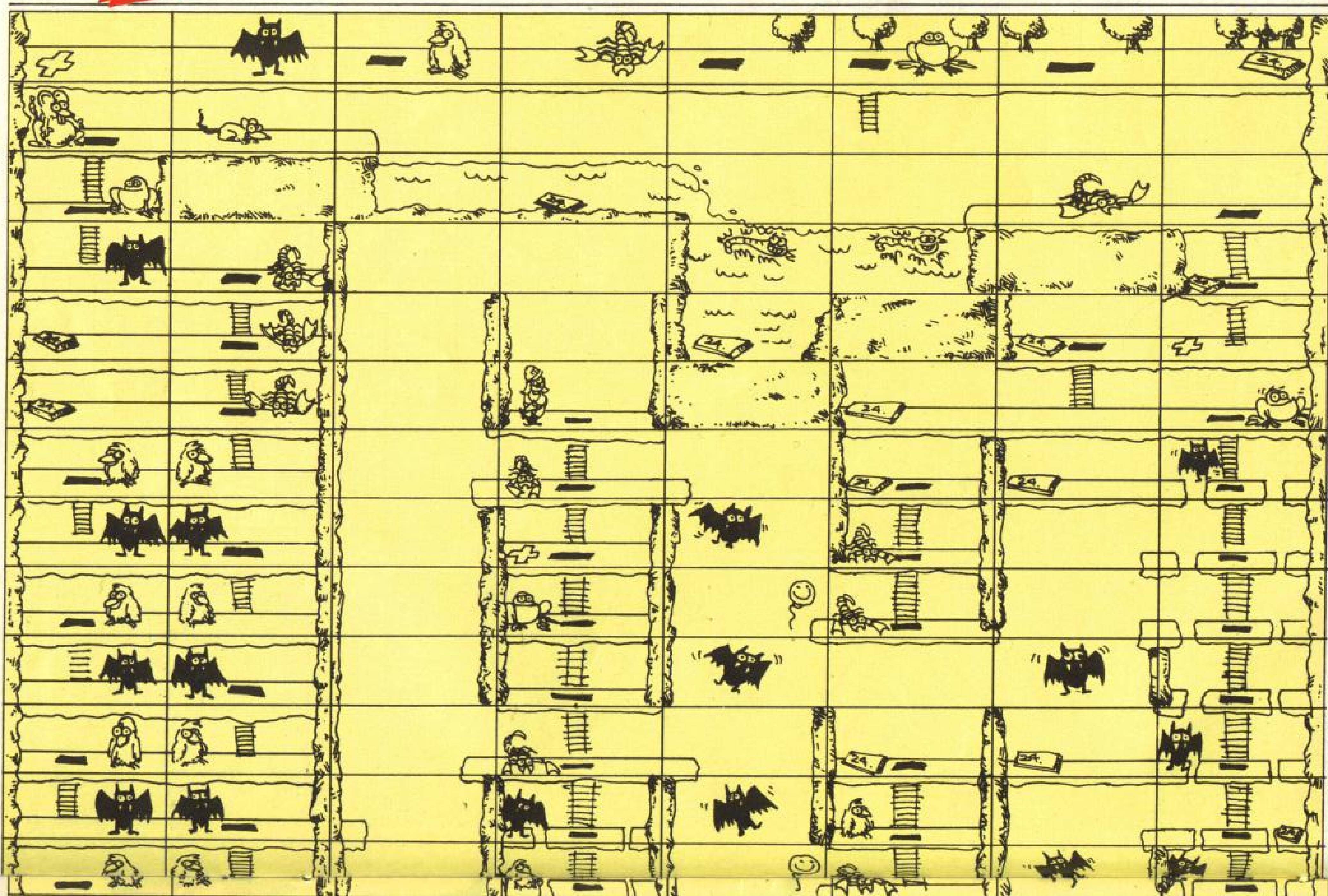
Screen Eighteen – Jump though the screen exit on the right to land safely on the next screen.



PITFALL II

THE MAP!

COMPILED BY MARK GOTOBED, DEREHAM, NORFOLK.



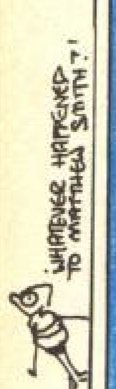



FLOOR WITH HOLE.
LADDER.
RED CROSS.
RAT.
QUICKCLAW.
RHONDA.
BALLOON.
RAJ DIAMOND.
WATER
ROCK.

JET SET WILLY II POKES

Heeere's Jim Blackler of Lancaster with some brilliant POKEs for this ageing follow-up to a follow-up. Just type in the listing and follow the on-screen instructions for a really fun time.

```
1040 FOR A=355 TO 427:READ Z:POKE A,Z:NEXT
1050 INPUT "SPEED (1 TO 10)";A:POKE 374,A
1060 INPUT "INFINITE LIVES (Y/N)";A$:IF A$="N"
THEN POKE 380,173
1070 INPUT "ABOLISH SPRITE COLLISION (Y/
N)";A$:IF A$="N" THEN POKE 370,173
1080 INPUT "FALL ANY HEIGHT (Y/N)";A$:IF
A$="N" THEN POKE 357,173
1090 INPUT "MOVEMENT OFF PRACTICE LEVELS
(Y/N)";A$:IF A$="N" THEN POKE 385,173
1100 INPUT "USE F1 AS TRANSPORTER BEAM (Y/
N)";A$
1110 IF A$="N" THEN POKE 390,173: POKE
395,173:POKE 400,173
1120 INPUT "OBJECTS REQUIRED TO FINISH (0-
999)";A$: A$=RIGHT$("00"+A$,3)
1130 SYS 419
1140 DATA 169, 174, 141, 98, 84, 169, 1, 141, 25, 115,
169, 96, 141, 32, 115
1150 DATA 206, 9, 84, 169, 4, 141, 160, 78, 169, 109,
141, 244, 81, 169, 173, 141, 198, 98, 169
1160 DATA 76, 141, 233, 75, 169, 13, 141, 234, 75,
169, 75, 141, 235, 75, 76, 0, 56, 169, 99, 141
1170 DATA 148, 130, 169, 1, 141, 149, 130, 76, 150,
130, 32, 86, 245, 169, 1, 141, 215, 3, 96
```



OINK (CRL)

Have you read the comic? Great isn't it – a bit like a junior *Viz* (and if you haven't seen that, you're really missing something). Have you played the game? That's great too – especially when you're playing with unlimited lives. If you'd like to do the same, just load the program, reset the 64 and enter the following:

POKE 31991,227 **Unlimited Pimples**
POKE 32215,0 Kill sprite to sprite collision on Pete's Pimple
POKE 39923,227 **Unlimited Rubbishmen**
POKE 43574,0 **Kill Rubbishman's collision detection**
POKE 47774,227 **Unlimited Tom Thugs**
POKE 47426,1 **Kill sprite to sprite collision on the Tank.**

If you want to see the end POKE 16433,12 to fill all the panels. When you've made your changes, enter SYS 16384 (RETURN) to start. If you haven't got a reset switch then type in the following listing, RUN it and load the game as normal. The 64 resets when the game has loaded, allowing you to enter any of the above. Thanks to David Slack of Maidstone, Kent.

```
10 FOR Y=679 TO 746
20 READ D:POKE Y,D:A=A+D:NEXT Y
30 IF A=7568 THEN SYS 679
40 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA":END
50 DATA 32, 44, 247, 169, 183, 141, 245, 3, 169
55 DATA 2, 141, 246, 3, 76, 82, 3, 169, 196, 141
60 DATA 55, 5, 169, 2, 141, 56, 5, 76, 0, 4, 169
65 DATA 128, 141, 251, 65, 169, 31, 141, 252, 65
70 DATA 162, 15, 189, 219, 2, 157, 127, 31, 202
75 DATA 208, 247, 76, 0, 64, 32, 100, 70, 201, 96
80 DATA 208, 7, 169, 55, 133, 1, 76, 226, 252, 96
```

ZYNAPS (Hewson)

Blast 'em, maim 'em. Kill! Kill! Kill! This listing doesn't make the game any easier, as you go back to the beginning of a level every time you die – but at least you don't have to go all the way back to the start! All you have to do is type in the listing, RUN it and unlimited lives are yours. And all that is thanks to Zoltan Kelemen of Tyreso, Sweden.

```
3 FOR I=533 TO 569: READ A: POKE I,A: C=C+A:
NEXT I: IF C=4798 THEN SYS 533
4 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA!"
5 DATA 198, 157, 169, 0, 162, 1, 168, 32, 186, 255, 32,
189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 169, 76, 141, 209, 3
6 DATA 136, 140, 211, 3, 96, 169, 189, 141, 146, 183,
141, 2, 184, 108, 47, 0
```

BOMBJACK (Elite)

Right, here goes a series of pretty unusual POKEs. First of all load the game, then reset the machine. Now, here's where the fun starts.

If you POKE 5112,234 (RETURN) followed by SYS 3101 (RETURN) and clear the first screen, Bombjack stands still and listens to the music.

Reset your CBM again and type POKE 5112,123 (RETURN) and SYS 3101. When BJ walks past a hostile, six Bombjacks appear on the scoring column.

Reset the computer again and enter POKE 5115,123 (RETURN) POKE 5112,123 (RETURN) POKE 5112,255 (RETURN) and restart by typing SYS 3101. You now have a remix of the music. Start the game and move past some hostiles. Stand Bombjack still and listen to the remix again.

Thanks very much to Mark A Skinner of Moulton, South Glamorgan for those unusual POKEs. Has anybody else got anything like it?

SHORT CIRCUIT (Ocean)

The film isn't much cop, and unfortunately the game reflects this a little too well. Still, if you've bought it, perhaps you'd like to make use of this Mick Mills and Al unlimited lives listing, which provides fun for all the family. Just enter and RUN it for unlimited lives.

```
10 L=49152
20 FOR X=1 TO 13:T=0
30 FOR Y=1 TO 8
40 READ A:POKE L,A
50 L=L+1:T=T+A
60 NEXT
70 READ C:IF T=C THEN 90
80 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA" X×10+90:END
90 NEXT
95 PRINT "SYS 49152 TO LOAD AND RUN."
99 END
100 DATA 169, 1, 170, 168, 32, 186, 255, 169, 1150
110 DATA 0, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 169, 1145
120 DATA 32, 141, 168, 4, 169, 48, 141, 169, 872
130 DATA 4, 169, 62, 141, 93, 5, 162, 2, 638
140 DATA 142, 170, 4, 142, 94, 5, 232, 142, 931
150 DATA 111, 5, 162, 49, 189, 56, 192, 157, 921
160 DATA 48, 2, 202, 16, 247, 76, 99, 3, 693
170 DATA 201, 2, 240, 4, 201, 1, 208, 2, 839
180 DATA 169, 4, 153, 10, 0, 96, 169, 208, 809
190 DATA 141, 47, 25, 169, 26, 141, 48, 25, 622
200 DATA 169, 0, 141, 109, 31, 169, 24, 141, 784
210 DATA 234, 13, 169, 141, 141, 130, 34, 76, 938
220 DATA 72, 149, 32, 77, 77, 43, 65, 76, 591
```

SHADOW SKIMMER (The Edge)

An infinite supply of spaceships are yours for the taking. Just type in this Zoltan Kelemen listing and load the game. It's as easy as that!

```
3 FOR I=35821 TO 35871:READ A:POKE
I,A:C=C+A:NEXT I:IF C=6082 THEN SYS 35851
4 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA"
5 DATA 169, 246, 141, 189, 2, 96, 0, 0, 96, 169, 3, 141,
133, 139, 169, 140, 141, 134, 139, 76, 32
6 DATA 139, 169, 155, 141, 219, 72, 76, 16, 8, 169,
139, 141, 41, 3, 133, 157, 169, 0, 162, 1, 168
7 DATA 32, 186, 255, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255
```

NEMESIS THE WARLOCK (Martech)

There was a little 'feature' in the listing printed in last month's tips section which caused the game to crash after a while – but Mick Mills and Al have rectified it with this new supabrill version, which also includes the option of an auto-exit! Just type in the listing, RUN it and follow the on-screen instructions.

```
10 L=49152
20 FOR X=1 TO 14:T=0
30 FOR Y=1 TO 8
40 READ A:POKE L,A
50 L=L+1:T=T+A
60 NEXT
70 READ C:IF T=C THEN 90
80 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA"X×10+90:END
90 NEXT
93 GOSUB 300
94 GOSUB 400
95 PRINT "SYS 49152 TO LOAD AND RUN."
99 END
100 DATA 169, 1, 170, 168, 32, 186, 255, 169, 1150
110 DATA 0, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 169, 1145
120 DATA 26, 141, 150, 3, 169, 192, 141, 151, 973
130 DATA 3, 96, 169, 76,141, 91, 56, 169, 801
140 DATA 44, 141, 92, 56, 169, 192, 141, 93, 928
150 DATA 56, 76, 25, 8, 162, 49, 189, 58, 623
160 DATA 192, 157, 128, 8, 202, 16, 247, 76, 1026
170 DATA 128, 8, 32, 181, 2, 32, 181, 2, 566
180 DATA 32, 181, 2, 169, 0, 141, 17, 143, 685
190 DATA 169, 0, 141, 220, 138, 169, 0, 141, 978
200 DATA 116, 140, 141, 51, 139, 169, 169, 141, 1066
210 DATA 185, 138, 169, 30, 141, 190, 138, 169, 1160
220 DATA 208, 141, 75, 139, 169, 241, 141, 76, 1190
230 DATA 139, 76, 0, 128, 65, 76, 77, 77, 638
300 REM
310 PRINT "DO YOU WANT INFINITE AMMO? (Y/
N)";
320 GET A$:IF A$<>"Y" AND A$<> "N" THEN 320
330 IF A$="N" THEN POKE 49220,1
340 PRINT A$:RETURN
400 REM
410 PRINT " DO YOU WANT INFINITE AMMO? (Y/
N)";
420 GET A$:IF A$<>"Y" AND A$<>"N" THEN 420
430 IF A$="N" THEN POKE 49225, 214
440 PRINT A$:RETURN
```

STAR PAWS (Software Projects)

The trouble with this merry romp is that you can always get so far, then when there are about six birds to get, Rover dies of starvation! If this is happening, take this Zoltan Kelemen cure – an easy-to-use type in listing which just has to be entered and RUN. Go for it, and save the universe.

```
3 FOR I=10497 TO 10526: READ A: POKE I,A:
C=C+A: NEXT I
4 FOR I=512 TO 519: READ A: POKE I,A: C=C+A:
NEXT I: IF C=3988 THEN SYS 10505
5 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA!"
6 DATA 169, 2, 141, 5, 84, 76, 1, 82, 198, 157, 169, 0,
162, 1, 168, 32, 186, 255, 32, 189, 255, 32
7 DATA 213, 255, 78, 215, 8, 76, 32, 8, 169, 96, 141,
186, 23, 76, 0, 16
```

SLAP FIGHT (Imagine)

I've really got into the arcade version – it's brilliant. The 64 version isn't too bad either, and the gameplay and music are both absolutely spot-on. The later levels are a little tough, so if you require a helping hand with some unlimited lives, simply type in and RUN this Zoltan Kelemen listing before loading the game.

```
3 FOR I=512 TO 533:READ A:POKE
I,A:C=C+A:NEXT I
4 FOR I=820 TO 827:READ A:POKE
I,A:C=C+A:NEXT I:IF C=4042 THEN SYS 512
5 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA"
6 DATA 198, 157, 169, 0, 162, 1, 168, 32, 186, 255, 32,
189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 169, 196, 141, 199
7 DATA 3, 96, 169, 44, 141, 255, 39, 76, 207, 3
```

THE LAST NINJA (System 3)

After last month's tips, I wouldn't have thought you needed these infinite lives POKEs. However, if you're still having trouble, type in and RUN this listing before loading the game for a never ending supply of Last Ninjas. Cheers to Tim and Ian Fraser **of Ruislip, Essex.**

```
3 FOR I=579 TO 640:READ A:POKE
I,A:C=C+A:NEXT I
4 FOR I =31722 TO 31735:READ A:POKE
I,A:C=C+A:NEXT I:IF C=8876 THEN SYS 579
5 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA"
6 DATA 198, 157, 78, 41, 3, 169, 0, 162, 1, 168, 32,
186, 255, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 120, 136
7 DATA 140, 21, 3, 169, 128, 141, 237, 2, 238, 119,
244, 238, 169, 166, 141, 20, 3, 108
8 DATA 20, 3, 162, 121, 142, 178, 3, 206, 179, 3, 76,
81, 3, 169, 197, 141, 135, 120, 76, 191, 3, 12
9 DATA 0, 0, 169, 49, 141, 159, 2, 169, 234, 141, 160,
2, 96
```

Once again it's all over. If you have anything in the way of tips, maps, POKEs, cheats, general comments or whatever then send them in to me at ZZAP! TIPS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB. See you in 3D in the mega tips section next month. Until then . . . TTFN!

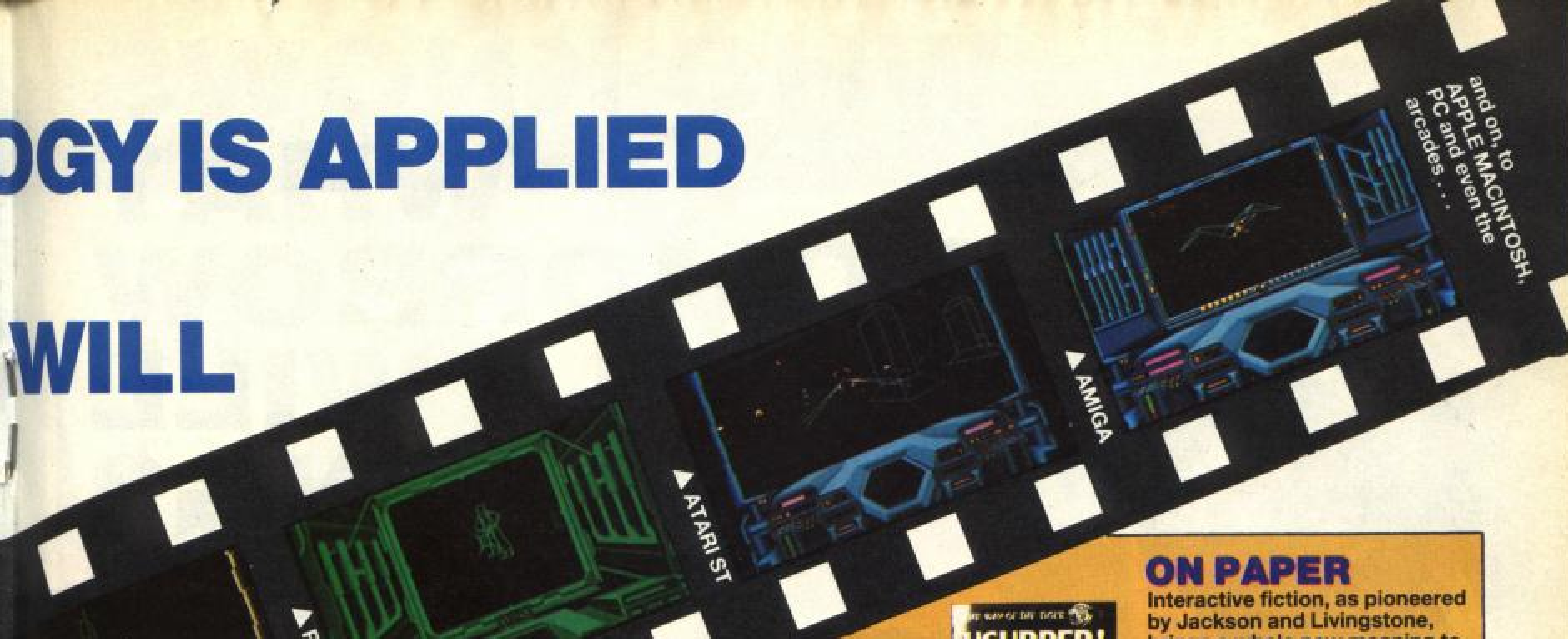




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WILL



ON PAPER

Interactive fiction, as pioneered by Jackson and Livingstone, brings a whole new meaning to reading for pleasure. And printed paper is one of the oldest ways of getting entertainment into people's homes. We'll be looking at new developments on this front, including board games, Play By Mail – and maybe even Softstrip, a new means of distributing software on machine-readable paper.

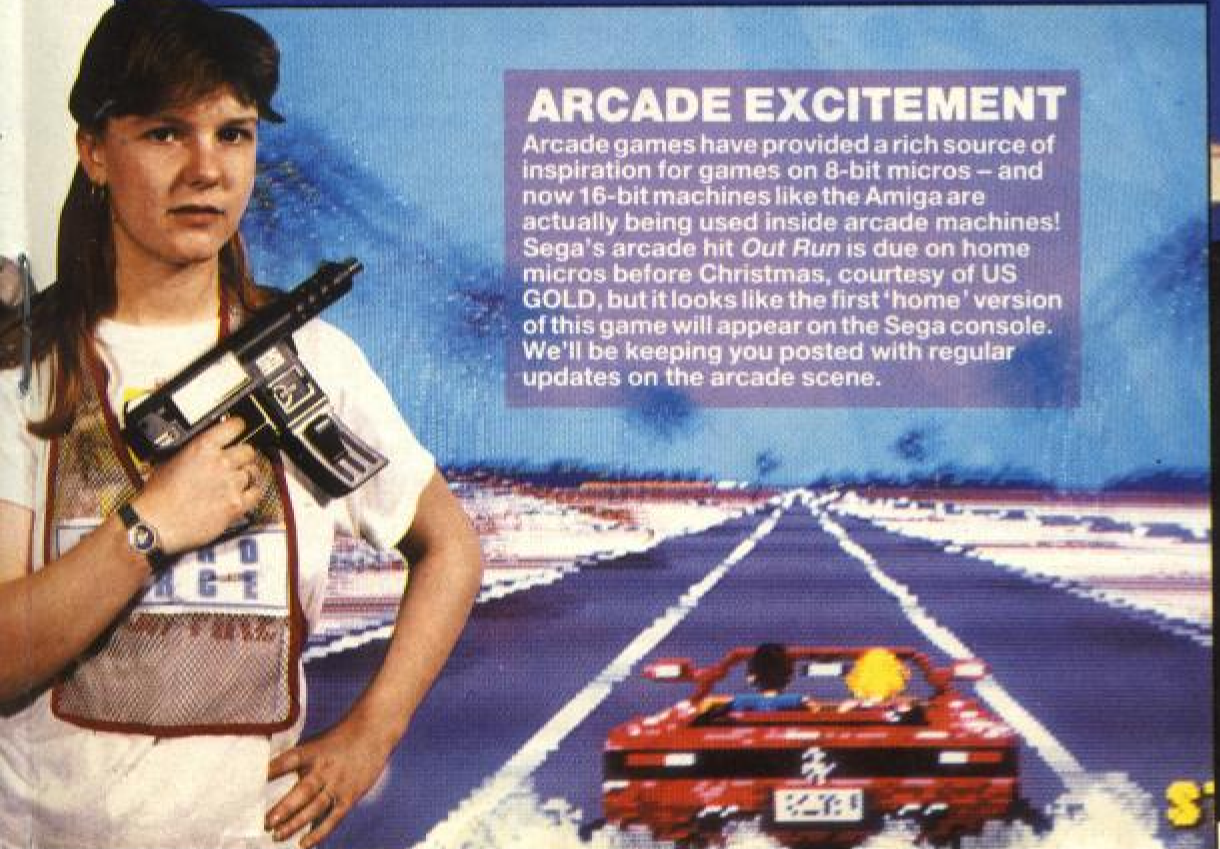


TV WIZARDRY

Anglia TV have teamed up with some impressive computer technology to create an interactive role-playing game. Using paintings provided by David Rowe, an artist responsible for many of the advertisments and inlays produced by the software industry, the TV technicians at Anglia superimpose human figures on fantasy scenes to create a game environment that's unique.



It's not all done by mirrors any more in the world of special effects. Computers are used to enhance and mix images, and live action can be added to scenes using chromakey. Areas are made 'transparent' by masking them in blue - which explains why this warrior is dressed so strangely. KNIGHT MARE is the name of the Anglia TV show, due to be broadcast this autumn – and look out for the computer game, which Activision plans to bring to your home before long.



ARCADE EXCITEMENT

Arcade games have provided a rich source of inspiration for games on 8-bit micros – and now 16-bit machines like the Amiga are actually being used inside arcade machines! Sega's arcade hit *Out Run* is due on home micros before Christmas, courtesy of US GOLD, but it looks like the first 'home' version of this game will appear on the Sega console. We'll be keeping you posted with regular updates on the arcade scene.



WHO KNOWS WHAT TOMORROW WILL BRING?



On the 17th of September something wonderful is going to happen. The shelves of newsagents across the country will be graced by the presence of an incredible new publication . . . It's called THE GAMES MACHINE, and these four pages provide a brief look at what you can expect to see in the bumper first issue. Graeme Kidd (far left) and Gary Penn are the dynamic duo behind THE GAMES MACHINE, taking a highly effective and radically different approach to reviewing games and covering the software scene in general.

Find out about Lazer Tag – tipped to be the toy of the eighties – in our in-depth look at seven different available systems. Dedicated consoles have returned with a vengeance and greatly improved hardware – but what do they have to offer? And on the home computer front . . . US Gold, Gremlin Graphics, GO!, Novagen, Firebird, and Activision all have some outstanding software under wraps for the Christmas period. Issue One of THE GAMES MACHINE has the answers, and a whole lot more besides . . .

Don't miss out on what's happening in the rapidly changing world of computer and electronic entertainment – use the form below and get your copy of THE GAMES MACHINE reserved at your local newsagents.

the GAMES machine

COMPUTER & ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT

Dear Newsagent

Newsfield, the publishers of CRASH and ZZAP 64! are launching a new magazine in September and I want to make sure I don't miss out. Please order me a copy of THE GAMES MACHINE, which is published on 17th September. In case of difficulty, those nice people at COMAG will make sure you can get stocks from your wholesaler for all those other people who are going to come in asking you for this wonderful new magazine!

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MANOEUVRES

With Philippa Irving



STYLE OR SUBSTANCE?

Weary and battle-stained messengers tramped across the war-torn wastes of North Oxford, ploughing through the battle lines of Japanese tourists and French school parties to bring despatches announcing my finals results. Yes – I got a second like everyone else. Now I've retreated from the centre of the city, the bit where all the nice buildings and the tourists are, to be a great writer and starve in a garrett. I've started my next novel and I've all sorts of ambitious plans to write for television, so watch out for my name on the screen!

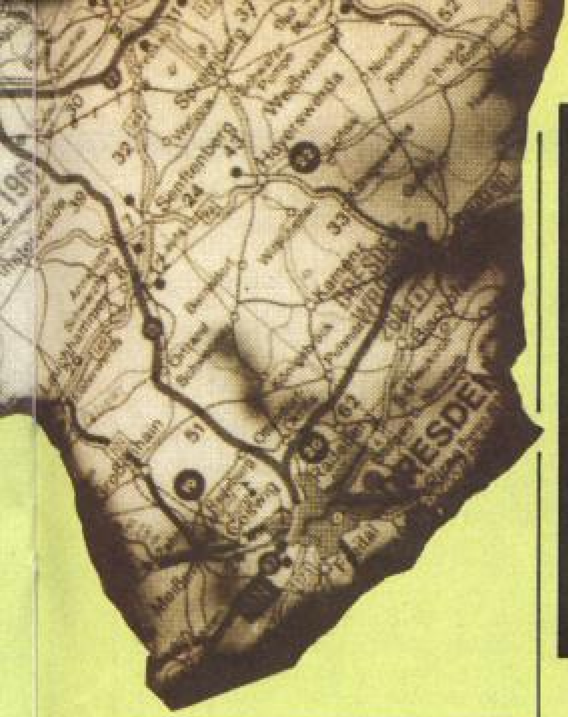
Now to work . . . the conflict between Presentation and Content in wargames is an interesting one, because war and strategy games are the only kind of computer software which can tolerate any separation between them. And it does seem to be a conflict; I have become uncharitably suspicious of games which load up looking polished and sporting design gimmicks, as one of this month's games, *Blitzkrieg*, does. I'm beginning to wonder whether it's a question of attitude on the part of the game designers. 'Real-Ale' wargame writers signify their intention to present a serious piece of complex strategic gameplay by swarthing it in a clumsy order frame, which just barely escapes hampering the playability, and dressing it in such unappealing graphics that none but those who take these things suitably seriously would ever be attracted to play their game. Commercial software houses, on the other hand, imagine that even when playing a wargame, what the average buyer really wants is another something 'em up, so they produce a piece of software to the high standards common in the arcade genre, which turns out to be a glossy but ineffective imitation of a real wargame. This may well be an over-simplification, but I'm thinking of *Battlecruiser* and *Blitzkrieg* as relative examples of each approach.

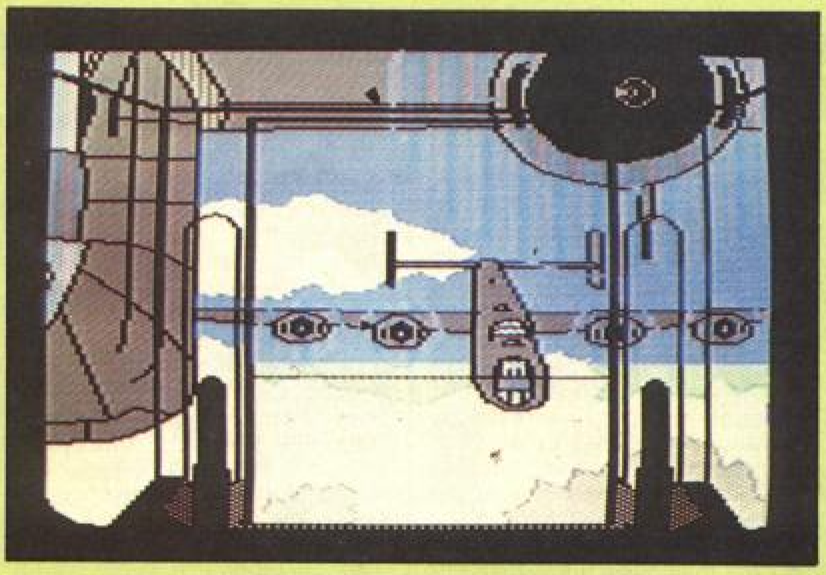
In other genres, technical advances have always been welcomed as actual steps forward. The impact of presentation in an arcade game is always very strong, and can genuinely affect the value of the game. There was a time about two years ago, when I first came to computer gaming, when the programming and presentation advances over the preceeding 18 months had been amazing. Spectrum game collectors could look at previously acclaimed programs like *Manic Miner* and then at the recent masterpieces like *Knight Lore*, *Alien 8* and *Lords of Midnight* and rejoice. Every new issue of CRASH and the late lamented PCG seemed to contain a blockbusting review of major breakthrough, and truly these were wondrous times to be alive in.

These breakthroughs boiled down to programming and presentation. *Knight Lore* was not intrinsically a better game than *Manic Miner* (and some people would argue strongly to the contrary!), except that it created a novel illusion of three dimensional solidity which most people then found added a great deal to their enjoyment. The total aesthetic appeal of the program was greater. Nobody complained that the revolutionary graphics and the slick programming made it commercial and glib, though later Ultimate productions certainly had plenty of abuse of this nature heaped upon them.

Strategy and wargames are not the same as arcade games because the base of their play is different, as I've tried to explain in past reviews. Wargames in particular do not generally attempt to create their own fantasy world – except in special instances – they are interfaced with reality, and expect the player to consider them very much as a means to the end of simulation, whether of a battle or a war machine. It is because they are less self-contained that they can get away with shoddy presentation, but still they reduce their aesthetic appeal and so, for no reason, they reduce their impact.

Commodore disk-based games in particular have no excuse, for they are not hampered by very great memory restrictions. Perhaps we're past the era of real technical programming advances, and perhaps it's unrealistic to hope for something of the sort to arrive in the form of a wargame. Wargame writers seem to be great traditionalists. But it's not too much to ask for a neat screen display, an attractive character set, clear and (if possible) imaginative-looking unit counters, and some orders system which doesn't take half an hour to manipulate. Music is not necessary.





B – 24 FLIGHT SIMULATOR

SSI, £14.99 cass, £19.99 disk

Machine simulations are, when you think about it, at one extreme of the wargaming scale. Some games allow you to move armies across continents over a period of months, some ask you to direct divisions in a single battle, and a few let you position individual men in combat. Simulation games however put you directly behind the gunsight, and let you press the buttons – they represent a cross between the action of arcade gaming and the ideas of strategy gaming.

B- 24 Flight Simulator and Combat Simulator, as it's more or less called (hardly a memorable title I trust you'll agree), puts itself firmly in the wargaming camp. A more appropriate title would be something like 'Mission Over Ploesti', although the operation of the gameplay involves flying a B-24 bomber at a level of some mechanical detail, the focus is firmly fixed on the object of the flight and most of the excellent documentation concentrates on the target rather than the machine. This is an unusual emphasis for a flight simulator, but it turns out to be what makes *B-24* more playable and absorbing than flight simulators usually are. It achieves this by cutting out what is normally considered to be an essential element in this sub-genre, the computer-generated impression of flight itself.

During the Second World War, the town of Ploesti in Rumania provided Hitler with most of his oil for the Axis War effort. It was reckoned that if the numerous oil refineries around Ploesti could be bombed into non-productive oblivion then Hitler's war machine would creak to a rusty stop. Accordingly, both the British and American air-forces launched a series of bombing raids on Ploesti, which was once known as the 'white town of black gold'. After 339 bombers had been shot down over there during the 25 attacks, it was called 'the bombers' graveyard' by Allied air crews. The campaign game allows the player to fly the 19 missions attempted by the (presumably American) 460th Bomb Group, which was based at Spinazolla near the East coast of Italy. Essentially the player is fighting history; the aim is to get the production of oil refineries down lower than the historical figure after the B-24s had finished their attack. Doing better than the original crews means that you will shorten the Second World War.

Thoughtfully, the game also provides the player with an easy introductory mission; bombing another town, Mostar, which is right on the west coast of Yugoslavia, and is therefore easy to reach from Spinazolla. There is also a particularly difficult individual mission to Bucharest, which is so far from base that it requires efficient flying to make it there and back without carrying so much fuel that there's no room for a sufficient number of bombs.

The screen display does not show the interior of a cockpit, as one would usually expect of a flight simulator. Instead, the B-24 is viewed from above as an extremely basic aeroplane shape, flying over a pleasantly drawn and detailed landscape. The first 'screen' shows the landing strip, viewed at close range, but as soon as the plane lifts off the player finds himself looking down at the ten-mile square surrounding the airbase from an indeterminate height. Although, of course, the aeroplane can move up and down tens of thousands of feet, there is no visual representation of three-dimensional movement . . . and therefore no sensation of flying at all. And although the stick drawing aeroplane does point itself in the right general direction when the player changes its bearing, it does so very inexactly. Information about the plane's precise location is gained from the numbers on the instrument panel, which yet again makes no attempt at visual realism. There are no blurred dials or unhelpful lights in this flight simulator. All instruments give their readings in neatly arranged numerical form, and the main difficulty in learning how to fly the plane is remembering which of these numbers are important.

All this may be seen as a drawback for those looking for a flight simulator – but for those looking for a game, I think the compromises are worth it for the sake of clarity. The actual mechanism of the B-24 is authentically simulated, and the plane reacts noticably to carrying extra weight, to wind speeds, and to limping along with three of its engines out and one of its wings on fire.

The relevant parts of Italy, Yugoslavia and Rumania are divided into ten-by-ten mile squares, filled either with mountains, land, sea or hill. These terrain types are important insofar as it's best to fly at a sufficient altitude to avoid crashing into them. One screenful represents one square on the glossy card map provided, so if your instruments are taken out in combat it's possible to navigate 'by hand'. Normally, pressing a key will bring up a navigator's report, telling you precisely where you are, with co-ordinate's exact to two decimal places.

When playing the campaign game, the player has to choose a mission to any one of the 12 refineries situated around Ploesti. Daily production figures are displayed on the campaign screen, and as they are taken out their production will drop. Having chosen the target, the aim is then to get to Ploesti – balancing the amount of fuel taken with a sufficient number of bombs.

Before you can head off Ploesti-wards, you have to assemble your squadron. This involves circling above the airfield at the right height, keeping up the correct speed; if any bombers drop out, that will be one less for the mission. There's also a fighter escort to pick up at a specified location, to protect the bombers from 'bogeys' on the journey out. Near the target, if you get there in time, you pick up a bombing escort. To bomb successfully, you have to be exactly on the right course – something which requires a lot of fine manoeuvring. A strong wind can make it very difficult to attain and maintain any course at all. Bomb sights, which come into operation once you open the bomb doors, enable you to fine-tune your position and send the bombs away almost exactly over the target.

It's concentrating on the mission that gives this game atmosphere, and the superb documentation – there's a separate book full of information about Ploesti, including an extract from a B-24 pilot's autobiography – enhances the sense of involvement which is invited by the straightforward gameplay. A minor complaint is the irritating drone of the plane's engines which keeps going throughout the flight, though when you stall or run out of fuel, the silence that ensues is suitably ominous – and you can always turn it down. The difficulty level is adjusted by altering a set of parameters such as engine reliability, and whether you want any weather or not, so the challenge is extensive.

Maybe it would get boring eventually flying back and forth to Ploesti if you really played the game to death, but you have the option of bombing Bucharest for target practice, and the fact is that this flight simulator, unlike many, encourages persistance and playing until the early hours.

PRESENTATION 75%
Quite a 'solid' appearance and thankfully no disk access pauses, but the program seems sluggish to respond to the joystick and keypresses.

GRAPHICS 70%
The landscape is pleasant, with aerially-visible features like roads convincingly marked – but the plane itself has about three frames of animation.

RULES 95%
The documentation is a major feature, containing a large amount of information about Ploesti and the missions that were sent out over it.

AUTHENTICITY 93%
Despite the lack of 'real' flight simulation graphics, it's easy to get absorbed in the historical atmosphere. Also, the plane's dynamic reactions to flight conditions are very credible.

PLAYABILITY 89%
Once you've got the hang of it, it's difficult to stop.

OVERALL 90%
A convincing and absorbing game, which may well appeal to those who don't usually like conventional flight simulators.

BLITZKRIEG

Ariolasoft, £9.99 cass, £12.99 disk

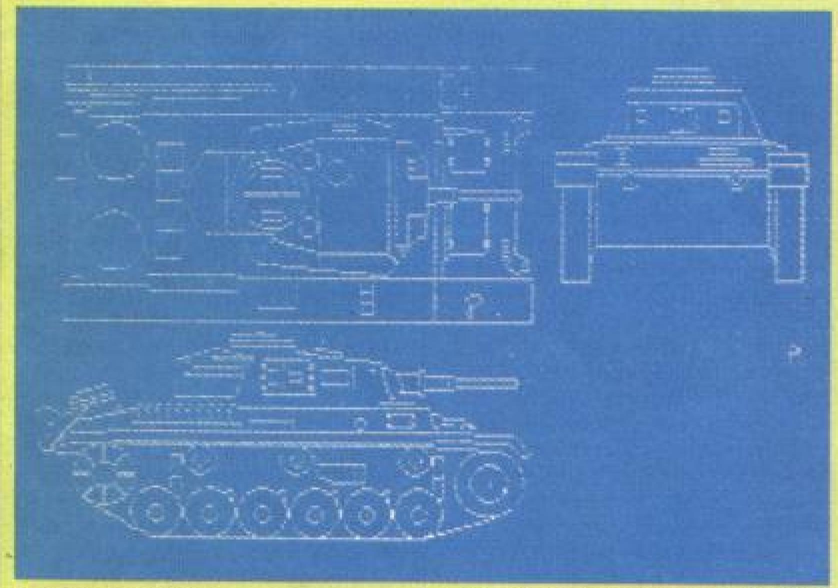
Blitzkrieg has a wide, sweeping sort of scenario, expressed in its sub-title – 'The game from the rise of Hitler to the fall of Dunkirk', with Dunkirk crossed out and England written above it in crayon. It is immediately apparent that *Blitzkrieg* is going to be one of those 'change the course of European history on a grand scale' games, and the basic task facing the player is to conquer Western Europe in time for tea. The game runs from May 1st to September 30th, year unspecified, at which date, apparently, the weather deteriorated; and it is in real time, with each turn taking about 15 seconds.

There are some strategy games which work with a real time setting, but they are not very many and they really have to be a concept designed around the need for the player to think and move fast. Having seen several real-time wargames which expect the player to rush division counters around as quickly as possible, I have come to the conclusion that no game of this type can be very successful – and in fact they're very often confusing and unplayable. I wonder if designers incorporate real time gratuitously because they feel that computer gamers expect 'game space' action. Arcade games exist in their own self-created fantasy world, and in their own time as well. 'Real time' is a fallacious term; real time for a wargame would be weeks or months. Real time means game time, and by asking a wargame to exist in game time the designer squeezes it unavoidably into being just that – a game. Wargames are games, of course, but unlike arcade games they are supposed to stand for and evoke a reality. And real generals had weeks to make major strategic decisions, and at least a day to choreograph a battle. They certainly did not have to conquer Western Europe in 40 minutes, which is how long the instructions say that a game of *Blitzkrieg* lasts. They didn't do it in an afternoon either, but games which allow the player as long as he wants create an illusion of space . . . however much time they really spend on it.

These are what I would call the psychological and artistic objections to a real time wargame. *Blitzkrieg* does nothing to overcome them, having a very 'toytown' and unrealistic atmosphere. And it demonstrates a more obvious disadvantage; it's impossible, or very difficult, to keep control of everything that's going on. Wargamers usually only have two hands and one brain, and real time wargamers of this type seem to require them to have several of each.

Blitzkrieg is beautifully programmed and presented, which makes its rapidly apparent unplayability all the more disappointing. The game loads with an optional fast-loader, after a warning that it will only work with 'perfectly aligned' disk drives. I was surprised to find that my disk drive was perfectly aligned, but the loader is certainly fast.

The opening options screen allows the player to spend resource points on altering the initial balance of forces, or to view plan diagrams about the weaponry used in the game. Selecting the latter option brings up a series of attractive line drawings and a smattering of information about the tanks, which, although very pretty, does little to compensate for the complete lack of back-up material in the rules.



You can take the easy way in and go for the default set-up, but it is perhaps more interesting to play about with the industrial resource units and build yourself an army. You can choose your own level of IRIs between 100 and 400 and then spend them on division strength, medium and reconnaissance. The allocation of resources is controlled in the form of a letter sent to you as the general, which is the first of many imaginative and individualistic touches in the design. There are four types of division – Air and Ground Panzers and Air and Ground Amphibious – and they can be bought with or without medium tanks, which increase the combat value. The amphibious divisions are important if you have an acquisitive eye on Britain, the conquest of which is of course unhistorical and will earn you 80,000 points. When you've finished the next part of the program loads, without the fast loader this time.

The map is split into two screens, representing the North-west of Europe and the South-east of England. There are no features marked on the on-screen map, and the cities look like rabbit's footprints for some reason. Fortunately there is a more informative map on the reverse of the instruction sheet. It indicates the names of cities, shows terrain, and superimposes a grid over Europe for easy reference. When the data card of each unit is examined, the player can pin point its position on the more detailed map. In principle this is a good idea, but in practice time seems too precious when you're into the game.

At the top of the screen a counter ticks away the days at the rate of one every 15 seconds, and at the bottom there is an arrangement which represents a set of index cards. These are pulled up – literally – by the function keys, and are the menus which drive the game. One gives access to utility options, one to the main command menu, one to the status of the selected unit and one is a file which keeps track of all messages sent to you by the division commanders. This is a lovely piece of design, but despite its originality, one of the game's main weaknesses is caused by this superficially attractive system.

To give a division any sort of orders you have to pull up the appropriate card, and then adjust the commands on it by scrolling through a menu for each part of the order. This is surprisingly and frustratingly fiddly, and quite time-consuming too; first you have to find the number of the unit you want, then the kind of movement order, and then the number of squares you want it to move. Sending the order drops the card back down, and the process has to be repeated for the next unit. And there can easily be 16 divisions on the board, all lumbering forward according to their last command and coming across various obstacles. In practice it is not easy to cope with more than a handful at a time, which leaves the rest idle. The game doesn't pause while you're grappling with the order card menus, so every trip of the joystick is another major setback to the German Masterplan.

On their progress across Europe the units can run into difficult terrain, which will slow them down or stop them altogether. When this happens, the division commanders send memos – neatly signed with their own names – to explain themselves. It is reasonably difficult to invade the Netherlands because of all the bog about, which brings armies to a standstill. The way of gaining more detailed information about the terrain in each square is to go into the tactical view, which reminds me strongly of those arcade sequences which sit in the middle of many PSS games in glorious irrelevance. The tactical view puts the player inside a tank, and he can rotate the rights to have a look at the landscape outside and plan his route, or so the instructions say. I found it difficult to make sense of this feature.

Cities are captured by the unit which gets there first, and turned into red, rather than black rabbit's footprints. No enemy units appear on the map at all, though their activities are reported by the division commanders, so the game seems to be little more than a mad dash across the best terrain to take out the cities. Lack of success is abruptly rewarded by Hitler, usually with a bullet in the brain.

This is not a satisfying game. It creates no reality and allows no scope for the exercise of skill, and because of the real time setting it is not particularly playable. The lack of a workable game is all the more regrettable, and noticeable, because of the carefully polished presentation. It's nice to see a wargame so well designed and programmed, but the best front-end in the world can't hide an unsound game.

PRESENTATION 91%
Slick programming, imaginative design, and a printed map to supplement the screen display.

GRAPHICS 88%
The screen map itself is rather dull and bland, but the rest of the graphics are very attractive.

RULES 60%
Minimal, but functional under the circumstances.

AUTHENTICITY 40%
Creates no sense of realism – largely because of the 'real-time' setting.

PLAYABILITY 51%
The orders system is pretty but unwieldy, and it's difficult to cope with all the units at once.

OVERALL 55%
Disappointing.



DESPATCHES

Once again a month has gone by and I haven't exactly been snowed under with mail. Many thanks to those of you who have written in, but what's the matter with the rest of you? It doesn't hurt you know. Take one sheet of paper, one pen, and cover the paper with words in an approximately grammatical arrangement. Pop the paper in an envelope, lick on a stamp, and deposit it in the letter box. I'm beginning to feel very lonely.

ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

Hi Philippa!
In the July issue of ZZAP! you encouraged us all to write to you, and this is an attempt on a letter from a Dane, even though my English isn't that good. (I hav lernt englis from e buck). But beside just being a stroke of madness, my letter has actually got a small reason. You see, I am actually not a wargamer, only a would-be wargamer. The trouble is that I don't know what game to start with. It should be an easy game, because I'm not very experienced, see? Well, I have played wargames in my time, *Theatre Europe* kept me playing for a while, but in the end it became too easy for me, and then it must be very, very easy. Now I don't know what game to play, and then I read this section in the July issue and then I thought to myself, 'I think this Philippa Irving could help me,' and I am still living in the hope that you can. Please give a suggestion for a beginner, and perhaps a suggestion of what game or games to play next. I'm getting tired of playing shoot 'em ups and 'that sort of game', which can be really good, but I just feel I need a change, and since I know I do not want to play adventures, wargames must be the order of the day. I want to wish you best of luck with this section. It deserves the chance, and then we've got a yet more varied magazine – that's nice. See you soon . . .

H C Mikkelsen
Skjern, Denmark

You don't say whether you've got a disk drive or not, which makes recommending games for the Commodore difficult. If you have, I would suggest you investigate SSI strategy games. They have an extremely varied catalogue, from pseudo role-playing to 'machine simulation', and there's bound to be something to suit your taste. As for cassette-based games, I'm so new to Commodore wargaming that I couldn't say with confidence! This is where all you older readers of the column can help myself and H C Mikkelsen. Why don't you write in with your suggestions for two or three good cassette-based wargames for the eager beginner, and I'll compile a list – with your comments – to be published in a future issue.

PI



TACTICS

This new section of Manoeuvres is designed to provide those wargamers stuck in the trenches or stranded in the desert with a way out of their predicament. I can't play every wargame extensively enough to be in a position to suggest strategies for all of them, so we will be relying on you to send in hints and tips for any game vaguely strategic. Come on chaps, Commodore strategy needs you!

This month I have some tips on *Shard of Spring* from **Philippa Irving** of Oxford with extra suggestions from **John Woods**.

In combat, Speed is almost the most important characteristic. No matter how strong and skillful a character is, if he only gets to hit the enemy once around he's not going to be very efficient. Make sure that speed is high when creating Warrior characters. For Wizards it is not so important, as they should not be put in the front line of combat – whatever it says in the rule book.

Watch out for enemy Wizards, and magic-using creatures of all sorts including Skeletons, Mages and Dragons. The best way to stop them using magic is to get them involved in hand-to-hand combat.

Mass damage spells are good value, especially if you put extra magic points into them. Putting more magic points into spells than the minimum required by the rule book increases their effectiveness – particularly important when you need to make an emergency healing spell in combat.

Spider's Bay is the town to find a Fighter's Guild, to increase the level of your Warriors. It's quite far South and a little to the East of the starting position, on the South coast of the island.

Terynor, the magic town, is where the Wizard's Guild is found. It's in the middle of the map, in amongst the second range of mountains you come across as you journey East.

An interesting place to visit is Islanda, which can be found immediately to the South East of Athe, which is almost directly East of Spider Bay.

Take heed of the warning in the rules not to venture too far East until you've gained some experience! There is a point on the map where the disk accesses, and beyond this 49th parallel the random encounters get really tough.

THE NEW ZZAP! STRATEGY CHART

Here's your chance to decide the fate of your favourite strategy games, by voting in the ZZAP! strategy chart. Tell us your favourite five strategy programs, and at the same time enter a draw for £20's worth of software (not necessarily strategic) and a ZZAP! T-Shirt. Five runners-up will also receive a T-Shirt, so get your entry in as quickly as possible.

The following are my five favourite strategy games in order of choice . . .

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

Name ....

Address ....

....

Should I win this month's prize, I would like the following £20's worth of software . . .

T-Shirt size S ☐ M ☐ L ☐

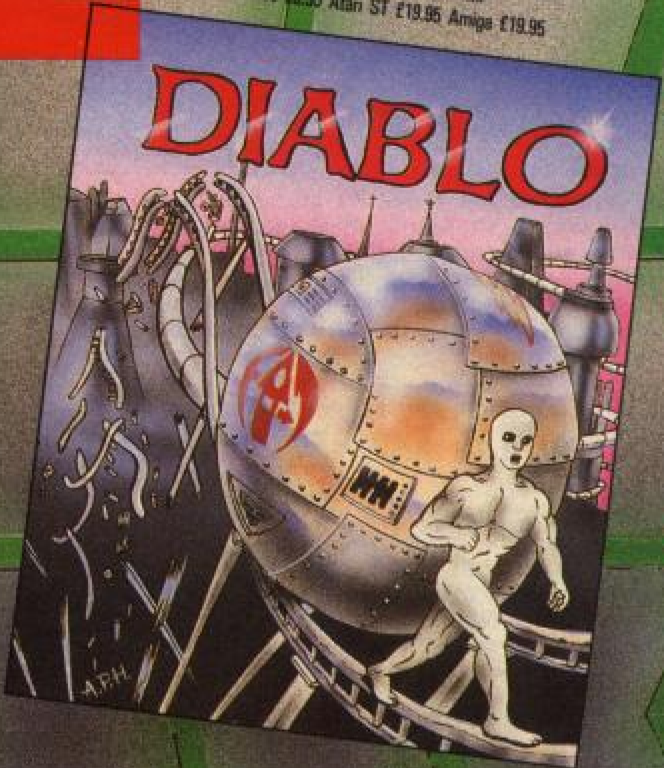
Completed coupons should be sent to **ZZAP! STRATEGY CHARTS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB**, to be received no later than September 9th 1987.

42

XTRON
Roll Playing space adventure, tremendously addictive. Once you start playing this game you'll never want to play anything again.
CBM 64 cassette £7.95 disc £9.95

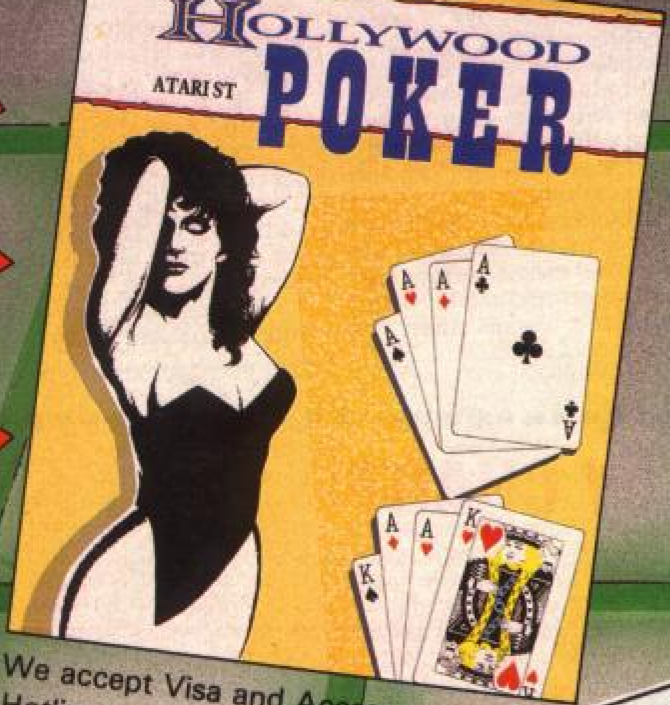
DIABLO
This game is very simple really. You slide pieces of track in front of a moving ball, and as it passes over a section of track, the track disappears. You just have to keep the ball rolling unti all the track is gone. Graphics are simple but effective, sound is nice and the mouse interface easy to use. It's also so maddeningly addictive that it could earn you a one way ticket to the funny farm.
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AN EXCITING SUPER ACTION ADVENTURE DAY OUT COULD BE YOURS

ALL THANKS TO MIRRORSOFT AND MEAN STREAK



Mirrorsoft's latest foray into the world of software features the adventure and excitement of high speed bikers riding for the ultimate prize of the Mean Streak bike.

To celebrate the release of the game, Mirrorsoft are also offering a pretty ultimate prize – five winners from both ZZAP! and CRASH (plus a selected group of delinquents from Newsfield and Mirrorsoft) will be taken on an action-packed Super Action day on saturday November 14th, while 50 runners up will each get a specially made Mean Streak key fob.

'Hold on!', I hear you cry, 'What's Super Action?' Well, they're a company who specialise in action sports and events for companies and members of the general public in search of excitement. If you don't fancy riding a Quad Bike, or a Trimoto, or a Meteorite buggy or taking part in a spot of Archery . . . then don't bother entering the competition. If, however, you're the type who laughs death in the face and eats three Shredded Wheat for breakfast, then read on . . . On second thoughts, go and take a look at this month's preview section and have a read about the Mirrorsoft game, Mean Streak.

OK. Done that? Good, now go read it again and take notes this time, 'cos the answers to all the following questions are in there – somewhere!

1. **What is the name of the Mean Streak track and what is it better known as today?**
2. **How many levels are there in the game?**
3. **Who are a) the designer and b) the programmer of Mean Streak?**

Got that? Right, put your answers on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelop and rush them, post haste, to the . . . **I'VE GOT A MEAN STREAK COMPETITION, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.**

Entries should be in by October 8th, and you must include your name, address and a telephone number where we can contact you in order to arrange the day out if you win. Right, get cracking. I'm just off to have a go at some underwater shark-wrestling to soothe my nerves.

PAINTING BY NUMBERS

Pausing only to cut off his left ear, Steve Jarratt gives his post-impressionist views on Rainbird's Advanced Art Studio. Is it a giant among art packages or a mere Toulouse Lautrec?

THE OCP ADVANCED ART STUDIO

Rainbird, £24.95 Cassette and Disk

Aspiring computer artists will no doubt be familiar with Rainbird's first steps into the world of pixel pictures, the *OCP Art Studio*, an art package which utilises the 64's hi-res mode to create monochrome or attribute-coloured pictures. Released last year, the packaging included a slip which mentioned the *Advanced Art Studio* – an upgrade which is now available.

The disk version loads the art program directly, but before the cassette version can be used, a back-up copy has to be made. The master program asks for details about your printer, allowing the user to configure the program correctly (the default being the Commodore MPS 801). The art program is saved onto a blank tape (provided by yourself) and is loaded in when you want to draw.

The master program is left untouched, and is only used when a different configuration is required or if the copy becomes damaged.

The program's protection comes in the form of a typed input from the manual – failing to respond to the program's request causes it to crash.

The latest version of the *Art Studio* makes full use of the Commodore's capabilities to create full colour pictures in multi-colour mode. The utility is totally WIMP driven (no, this doesn't refer to the user) which means that a system of Windows/Icons/Menus and a Pointing device is used to manipulate the program.

The 'pointing device' refers to a small floating cursor which is used to access the features and is moved around via the Keyboard, Joystick, Koalapad or Mouse (Datex, AMX or GEOS – not NEOS). The cursor doubles as the brush, and while the two former methods are sufficient, only the latter options are considered to be of any real use.

The cursor tends to be a little too large and can become slightly annoying, especially when trying to do fine work in 'fill' and 'magnify' modes. A choice of cursors, or cursor redefine mode would have be a useful feature to remedy this problem.

Drawing is carried out via Brush, Pen or Spray Can, with a variety of 'nibs' and spray formations available. The brush can be totally redefined to suit requirements, and may be used to draw many small items repeatedly – one tree soon becomes a forest.

A major problem often occurs when drawing a line 'freehand'. At any reasonable speed the line tends to break up, leaving it dotted and in need of touching up if a fill is intended. The only obvious way around this is to draw more slowly (very slowly in fact), or to use the continuous function which connects two defined points with a straight line. While being quite effective, this is rather limiting – and is practically useless for curves.

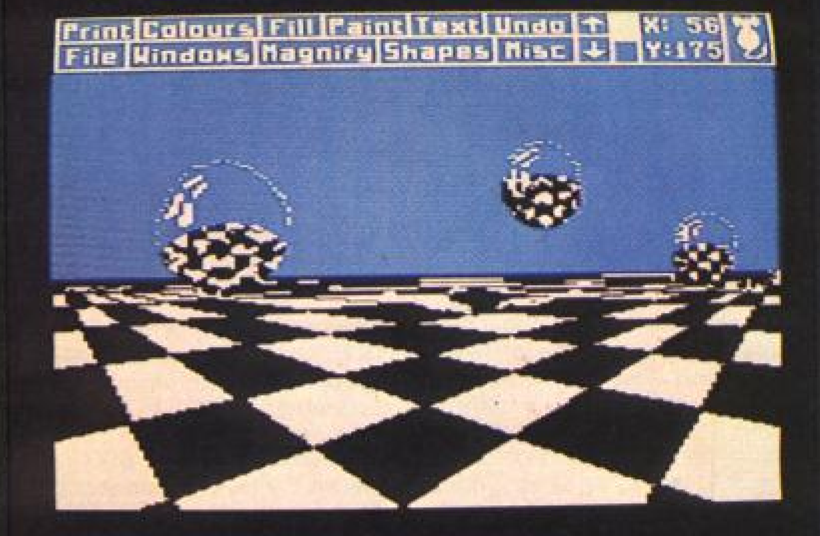
Other drawing functions include rays from a specified point, and the ability to draw squares and triangles by defining opposing corners. Circles are drawn in similar fashion, but sadly, the option to create ellipses is missing.



► No, this is not a picture of Glenys in the morning – it's a colourful demo that comes with the advanced art studio package!







► Julian's masterpiece demonstrates the wide range of effects which can be created by use of the line, circle and fill



► The palette menu allows fast selection of any of 16 colours



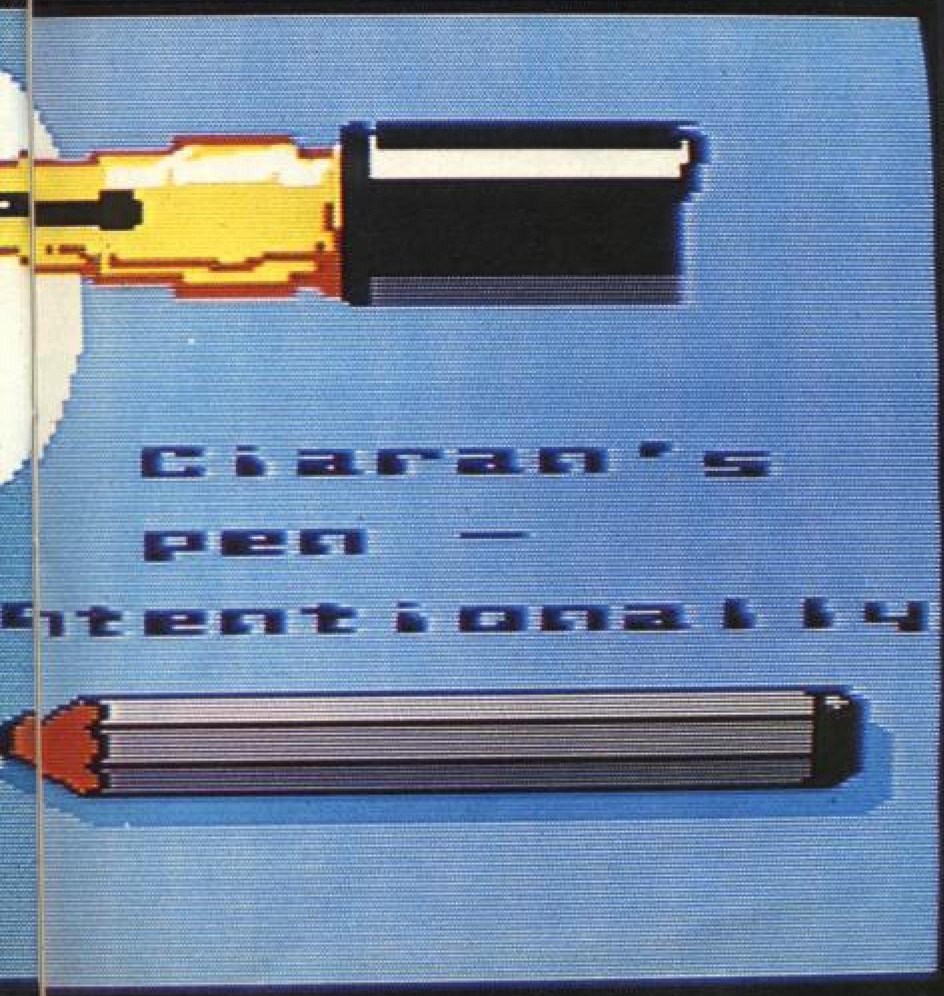
► Steve's superlative space pic, partially hidden by the 'Shapes' menu

The main advantage of the Advanced Art Studio over its predecessor is the fact that it utilises the 64's multi-colour mode – a definite improvement over the attribute-ridden hi-res. Although it allows greater choice of colours, some care and a little thought must still be taken to avoid colour problems. The multi-colour screen supports a 160 × 200 or 32,000 pixel resolution, but is split into 1000 8 × 4 pixel character squares or 'cells'. Each cell can hold up to four colours, one of which is the paper or background colour common to all cells. Positioning of colour is therefore slightly affected and attribute problems can still occur. This becomes clearly evident when attempting to put different multi-coloured patterned fills next to each other – colours from one pattern tend to bleed into the other, and the edges become jagged and discoloured as the machine attempts to put more than four colours within a cell.

The fill mode is used to colour larger areas of the picture, and can be block (single colour) or pattern filled. Any area can be filled, but it must be bordered by an unbroken line, or the colour bleeds out through the gap. A series of patterns are available within the program, and patterns and their repeat size can also be defined to enable complex designs to be quickly and easily created.

A useful and technically impressive feature of the package is its comprehensive windowing system, which allows areas of the screen to be copied or moved around as desired. Once a window has been defined, the program supports the options to Cut and Paste (effectively copy to another part of the screen); Cut, Clear and Paste (move without copying); Rotate the segment through right angles; Flip it horizontally or vertically, and even Re-scale it to a different size. Any defined area can be saved to tape or disk, allowing a library of picture elements to be built up for later use.

► Ciaran's abstract doodling uses the program's built-in character set



Digital doodlers will be pleased to hear that the program also allows mistakes to be easily corrected using the 'undo' option – effectively cancelling the last command (Mark, Line, Fill and so on). After each entry, the previous screen is stored in memory so that if a command is entered wrongly or an unwanted change made, the previous screen is recalled to be re-worked. Unfortunately the 'undo' option cannot be initiated while the program carries out a command. A fill that has gone wrong cannot, therefore, be cancelled halfway through: you have to wait for the rather lengthy process to finish before 'undoing' it.

This option is also made ineffective whenever the main screen is replaced with one of the other, larger features such as the pattern edit or magnify mode (this is because the main display must be stored while a secondary screen is brought into play).

The magnify screen can be used to 'touch up' areas of the picture by, as the name suggests, blowing up the image to either two, four or eight times normal size. The screen can then be moved around in magnify mode, allowing the whole picture to be edited in this manner if necessary.

Text entries can also be added to pictures and a full font editor is included so that a new character set may be designed.

Both versions include a BASIC 'slide-show' program which allows pictures to be loaded onto the screen without having to load the whole art studio program.

Bearing in mind the limits of the 64, the *Advanced Art Studio* package attempts to be as complete as possible within the constraints of the machine. The inclusion of the *Advanced Art Studio*'s predecessor makes the package tempting, but there are plenty of other art packages available including the superb *Neos Mouse and Cheese*.

The *Art Studio* has an extensive file-handling system, allowing full storage and retrieval of digitally conceived masterpieces. However, as with any system that uses lots of access, the cassette version is almost unusable. One flaw with the disk system is the ability to overwrite same name files by mistake. Instead of a 'file already exists – overwrite y/n?' prompt, the program just goes straight ahead and carries out the save operation. If you wanted to load a picture onto the initial blank screen, clicking on 'save' instead of 'load' initiates the saving of the blank screen over the named picture file, effectively erasing it. This is quite easy to do as the load and save commands are right next to each other . . . I should know, I've done it!

Bearing in mind the limits of the 64, the *Advanced Art Studio* package attempts to be as complete as possible within the constraints of the machine, and contains many features previously unavailable on other systems. The inclusion of the *Advanced Art Studio*'s predecessor makes the package tempting, but there are plenty of other art packages available including the superb *Neos Mouse and Cheese*. I do recommended this, but with an element of caution – shop around, think long and choose wisely.

STEVE JARRATT

ZZAP! WINNERS! ...RESULTS

STIFFLIP SPOT THE BALL

Cricketing fans were bowled over as Palace software offered a day at a test match to the winner of this Stifflip & Co competition. The prize went to the first person to correctly guess the position of an invisible cricket ball – he was Kent's **Lee Bassom**. As a consolation, 20 prizes of copies of the game are on their way to . . .

Neeraj Patel, West Midlands, B70 9NF; Mr R Garcia, Herts, S98 5LP; James Malley, Hampshire, PO9 6AL; Adam Smith, Staffordshire, OE13 0PB; John Curtis, Surrey, RH8 0QS; Lee McIntosh, Eastbourne, BN22 0DL; Daniel Smyth, Hants, SO4 3PJ; Richard Payne, North Yorkshire, YO18 8BA; Philip Whitehouse, Essex, CM16 5HA; Paul Kirk, Norwich, NR10 5JE; Nik Allonby, Cumbria, LA14 5TU; Paul Foster, Cumbria, CA13 0LH; J Ball, Hants, GU31 5HY; Sean Hopkins, Hants, PO2 0LA; C Caines, Bristol, BS16 3YJ; Paul Dorritt, Royal Anglian, BFPO 29; Colin Dunn, Tyne and Wear, SR2 7PL; Michael Sharpe, Peterborough, PE1 5JQ; Jason Mooney, London, SE4 1HQ; Christopher Curtis, Essex, SS14 1RB.

DOMARK'S DAYLIGHTS HOLIDAY

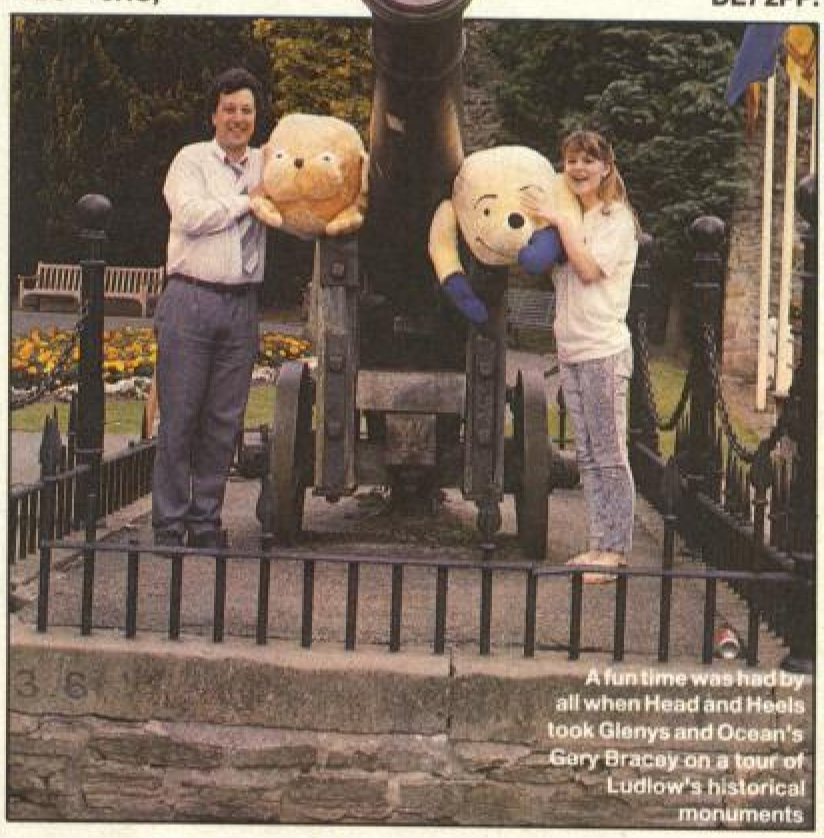
Five simple questions were all that stood between a lucky ZZAP! reader and a fortnight's holiday for two in the mediterranean – courtesy of Domark. Having waded through heaps and heaps of correct entries, Glenys finally came up with a name – so, without further ado, the prize goes to **Richard Bamforth** of West Yorkshire. Twenty runners up will be able to re-enact their favourite scenes from the movie with a super electronic key ring. They are . . .

Mr S M Cox, Kent, DA18 4DS; S Fenton, Staffs, ST9 9LU; Anthony Gisbourne, West Midlands, WV10 7HR; Aaron Stokes, Berkshire, RG2 8PP; W Hay, Tyne and Wear, NE40 3PU; A B Wragg, South Yorkshire, S70 5TG; Charles Lucas, Leics, LE9 8EH; Stephen Washington, Lancashire, PR4 5BE; Tony David, Kent, ME10 3AD; Ben Nuroin, East Sussex, TN33 0AU; Michael Bushnell, Oxford, OX3 7AB; Mr A V Ung, London, SE3 7PY; David M Woodcock, Surrey, GU9 9ED; P J Measures, Warks, CV11 6HD; Nigel Holmes, Cumbria, CA2 5QW; Ismail Vali, Surrey, KT3 5NF; Robert Gray, Devon, EX12 2BB; James C Easton, Selkirkshire, TD1 1RL; Richard Pargeter, Coventry, CV3 6NJ; J Boothby, Lancs, BB6 8DQ.

CUDDLY CONSPIRACIES

Little did we know when we announced this Head over Heels competition that we would be sparking off such ludicrous amounts of gamesmanship, skullduggery and downright bribery – all to win a pair of enormous cuddly toys. We even had an entry from Jon Ritman, who laid claim to the prize simply because he wrote the game! The competition was eventually won by Scotland's **Daniel Legden**, who wanted the two cuddly characters to help him get the chocolate biscuits off the top shelf! Congratulations Daniel, the dynamic duo will be on their way to Scotland as soon as they can escape from ZZAP! towers. The following 50 runners up will have to make do with a copy of one of the greatest games ever released . . .

Paul Kirk, Mill Street, Buxton; Trevor Stow, Herts, AL6 0JQ; Tony Jones, Aberdeenshire, AB5 5QN; Gary Llewellyn, Canvey Island, Essex; Robert Grace, Coventry, CV2 5BJ; Jonathan R Knox, Eaglescliffe, Cleveland; Arwel Owen, Gwynedd, LL65 1LR; William Callaghan, West Midlands, DY4 8AS; Joga S Bains, Kent, ME4 6UG; Graeme Clark, Lancs, OL15 0BT; Paul Coulson, Nr Stamford, Lincs; Gareth Goodman, Warwickshire, CV21 1JB; Simon Blair, Derbys, DE4 3BX; Robert Grace, West Midlands, CV2 5BJ; Simon Wicker, Herts, WD0 5HU; Edward Beirne, London, NW1 1ST; Marie Darlington, Shropshire, TF1 4TS; John Coutts, Scotland, AB1 4TS, Simon Kavanagh, London, E9 7HT; Paul Roast, London, SW19 6PS; Kieran Flynn, Co Tipperary, Ireland; David Brown, South Humberside, DN34 5RB; Steven Barnfather, Scotland, TD9 7DD; Mathew Pearce, London, SW16 2BX; Rick Dowling, Cheshire, WA13 0RD; Dyfed, SA68 0RH; Richard Pargeter, Coventry, CV3 6NJ; Merondus Hasky, London, N12 0BQ; James Veal, Avon, BS20 8EH; David Harker, Staffs, ST8 7SA; Aron Pullan, Kirkstead, LS4 2JY; Marten Van Zwietering, Hants, GU32 3BX; Leon Cox, Lancs, BB8 6DD; Colin Hall, Harrogate, North Yorkshire; Andrew Pitchforth, Wakefield, West Yorkshire; Ian Wilson, Tyne and Wear, NE10 0TD; Robin Taylor, Telford, TF3 1TQ; Sarah Smith, Essex, CO6 3RY; Richard Plumb, Leicester, LE2 0AL; Stuart Wright, Surrey, GU15 4YL; Phil Yard, Surrey, CR2 0BN; Iain Tattershall, Plymouth, PL6 7JU; Andrew Houghton, Winaters Green, Redditch; Robert MacIntyre, Cheshire, SK8 3AT; James P Gannaway, Southampton, Hampshire; Nick Bell, Glasgow, G53 7QZ; Ian Hewitt, Yorkshire, S6 4RA; Guy Parkinson, Prestbury, Cheltenham; Darren Morris, Essex, RM8 2DE; D Hallam, Castle Donnington, DE7 2PP.



A fun time was had by all when Head and Heels took Glenys and Ocean's Gary Bracey on a tour of Ludlow's historical monuments

ZZAP! 64 CHART VOTING COUPON

(Please write in BLOCK CAPITALS)

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If I win the £40 worth of software I would like the following games:
(Game and Software House)

T-Shirt Size S/M/L

I am voting for the following five games:

1 ....
2 ....
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5 ....

I am also voting for the following piece of music:
(Commodore 64 ONLY)

....

ZZAP! CHARTS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

CHART VOTING DRAW WINNERS

WINNER (£40 worth of software plus ZZAP! T-Shirt): Steve Carr, Eastbourne, Sussex.
RUNNERS UP (ZZAP! T-Shirt and Cap): Anurag Sharma, Merseyside; Jason Mooney, Brockley, London; M I Bethell, Bristol; Michael Garnett, Hatfield, Herts



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POSTMARK

with BRENDON KAVANAGH

Play By Mail (PBM) gaming is a hobby which has been about in the UK commercially for a good 16 years or so now. Over the last year however, it has hit a sudden boom period with many new players flooding in and numerous (and sometimes dubious) companies fighting for a share of the market. You may well have heard of PBM gaming through friends – if this is the case, and you don't have the foggiest idea what they're on about, then read on and learn!

PBM – WOZZAT?

Imagine sitting at your Commodore playing a strategy wargame which included perhaps ten other players all fighting against and working with each other. That is the essence of Play By Mail gaming – only the postal system and a time delay replace the keyboard and VDU. Here's the way it works . . .

A game environment is created by the Game Moderator (GM), becoming home to numerous player controlled charters and/or entitles. Players post to the GM instructions (ORDERS) for what they would like to do to try to improve their present situation. The GM is paid to receive all of these orders sheets and to process them together (using a computer), therefore making all of the necessary players characters interact (fight or trade perhaps). When this has been done a turn is complete. The GM posts to each player an individual and unique report on the present situation in the game. And so it continues.

Games may be human moderated, computer moderated or computer assisted. The ways in which the game is moderated affects its feel, but (unless it's very amateur) not its quality. Supporters of Role Playing Games tend to favour human moderated games, as human GMs are much more flexible when it comes to imaginative orders than computers could ever hope to be. Conversely, space-based games generally lose out on atmosphere if the turn reports are handwritten sheets rather than computer generated print-outs.

WHAT'S ABOUT?

There are many scenarios available for play by mail gamers to choose from. That said, they do all tend to somehow fit into one of five main categories (sometimes more): Science Fiction, Strategic, Tribal, Role Playing and Logistical.

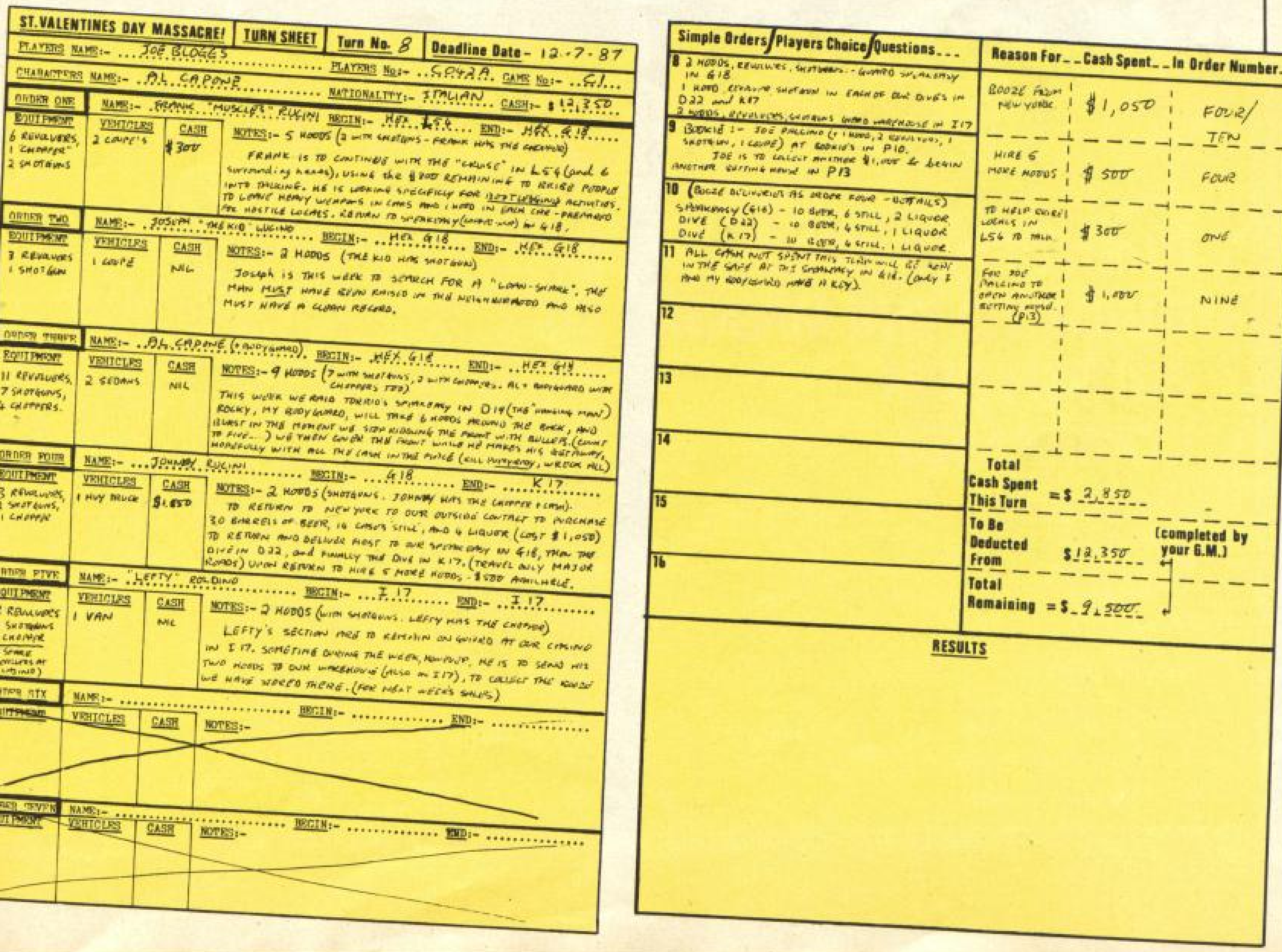
Generally speaking however, few games fit into any one category. Some are science fiction with fantasy overtones, others may be tribal games which involve both the use of logistics to perhaps feed a tribe while using strategy in battle against other tribes. There is really no clear definition. You can generally tell by reading magazine reports and advertising what a particular game may involve. You pays your money and takes your choice.

MONEY!!?!

Yes – money. Sadly, PBM companies do not run as charities. They charge for their services. It is common for them to charge a flat rate start-up fee (which may pay for your first few turns) followed by a turn fee ranging from 70p per completed orders sheet (incidentally, you can fit a lot on these) to over £3.00 for the most common games. Overall, the average game fee is about £1.50 per turn. Fair enough you say, but how often does a 'turn' take place? This again varies from game to game. Some games process turns once every ten days, some once a month. These are deadline games – the idea being that your order form reaches the GM by a set day and he processes all of the forms simultaneously with and interfering actions cancelling each other out to come up with a victor. Meanwhile, a number of games have no fixed deadlines. They process your turn as and when you send it in and the game will continue with or without you every day. These are open-ended games.

FINALE

Play By Mail games are characterised by the long spans of time they cover – you must bear in mind that a PBM campaign is no one-day campaign, it can go on for years! Normally, a game will continue until there is a clear victor (perhaps the only survivor?) or until some winning requirement is met by a player. This is often achieved by setting a quest, or asking for a certain points score to be reached to win. It depends greatly upon the game you choose to play. There


ST. VALENTINES DAY MASSACRE! TURN SHEET Turn No. 8 Deadline Date – 12-7-87
PLAYERS NAME:– JOE BLOGGS PLAYERS No:– G542A. GAME No:– G1
CHARACTERS NAME:– AL CAPONE NATIONALITY:– ITALIAN CASH:– $12,350
ORDER ONE NAME:– FRANK "MUSCLES" RUGINI BEGIN:– HEX L54 END:– HEX G18
EQUIPMENT: 6 REVOLVERS, 1 "CHOPPER", 2 SHOTGUNS VEHICLES: 2 COUPE'S CASH: $300
NOTES:– 5 HOODS (2 WITH SHOTGUNS – FRANK HAS THE CHOPPER)
ORDER TWO NAME:– JOSEPH "THE KID" LUGINO BEGIN:– HEX G18 END:– HEX G18
EQUIPMENT: 3 REVOLVERS, 1 SHOTGUN VEHICLES: 1 COUPE CASH: NIL
NOTES:– 2 HOODS (THE KID HAS SHOTGUN)
JOSEPH IS THIS WEEK TO SEARCH FOR A "LOAN-SHARK". THE MAN MUST HAVE BEEN RAISED IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ALSO MUST HAVE A CLEAN RECORD.
ORDER THREE NAME:– AL CAPONE (+ BODYGUARD). BEGIN:– HEX G18 END:– HEX G18
EQUIPMENT: 11 REVOLVERS, 7 SHOTGUNS, 4 CHOPPERS. VEHICLES: 2 SEDANS CASH: NIL
ORDER FOUR NAME:– JOHNNY RUGINI BEGIN:– G18 END:– K17
EQUIPMENT: 3 REVOLVERS, 2 SHOTGUNS, 1 CHOPPER VEHICLES: 1 HVY TRUCK CASH: $1,050
ORDER FIVE NAME:– "LEFTY" ROLDINO BEGIN:– I17 END:– I17
EQUIPMENT: 3 REVOLVERS, 2 SHOTGUNS, 1 CHOPPER VEHICLES: 1 VAN CASH: NIL
NOTES:– 2 HOODS (WITH SHOTGUNS. LEFTY HAS THE CHOPPER)
ORDER SIX NAME:– BEGIN:– END:–
EQUIPMENT VEHICLES CASH NOTES:–
ORDER SEVEN NAME:– BEGIN:– END:–
EQUIPMENT VEHICLES CASH NOTES:–
Simple Orders/Players Choice/Questions...
8 2 HOODS, REVOLVERS, SHOTGUNS – GUARD SPEAKEASY IN G18
9 BOOKIE :– JOE PALLINO
10 DIVE (D22) – 10 BEER, 4 STILL, 1 LIQUOR
11 ALL CASH NOT SPENT THIS TURN WILL BE KEPT IN THE SAFE AT THE SPEAKEASY IN G18.
12
13
14
15
16
Reason For.. Cash Spent.. In Order Number..
BOOZE FROM NEW YORK $1,050 FOUR/TEN
HIRE 6 MORE HOODS $500 FOUR
$300 ONE
$1,000 NINE
Total Cash Spent This Turn = $ 2,850
To Be Deducted From $12,350 (completed by your G.M.)
Total Remaining = $ 9,500
RESULTS

POSTMARK

should be an idiot's guide on 'How To Win' somewhere within the games rulebook . . .

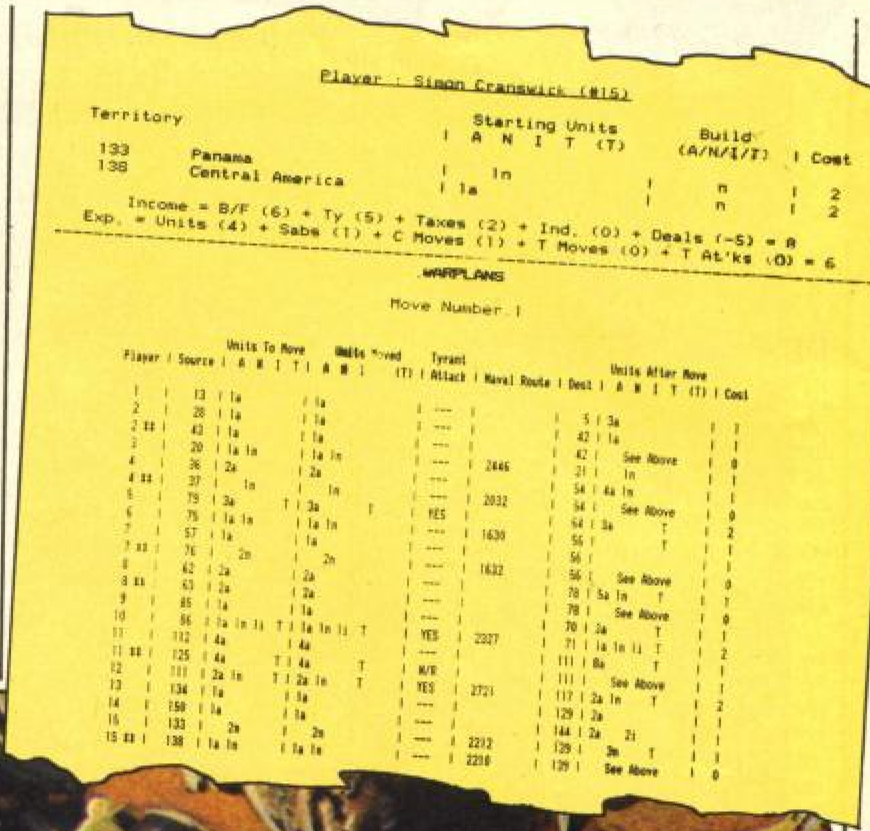
Ultimately, of course, games can end due to acts of God (computer failure perhaps), low popularity, or GM boredom. Fortunately such closes are rare enough to be discounted – almost.

THE BEST BIT

The best part of Play By Mail games, for me, though is the art of Diplomacy. In between turns you will find that players (once they have met within the game) will begin contacting each other through the post, by telephone, or even in person in an attempt to work together or against each other. This act of communication is called diplomacy. Clever diplomacy – conning the right players while allying with others, picking the right fights, leaking the odd bit of false information and so on can be the key to a good game. It's simply a combination of bluff, bluff, double bluff, lies and an ounce of truth. What is more, it's great fun and very difficult to describe. You must experience it to appreciate it (said the actress to the bishop). Diplomacy is often more enjoyable than the game itself, and definitely the most time consuming!

HOW DO I JOIN A GAME?

This too is easy. All you do is write to their address, perhaps sending an stamped addressed envelope for information on their games and see what they have to offer. Once this is done, pick and choose between them and send off the start-up fee to whatever you fancy. I shall start featuring some games next month. Keep on reading!


Player : Simon Cranswick (#15)

Territory		Starting Units A N I T (T)	Build (A/N/I/T)	Cost
133	Panama	1n	n	2
138	Central America	1a	n	2

Income = B/F (6) + Ty (5) + Taxes (2) + Ind. (0) + Deals (-5) = 8
Exp. = Units (4) + Sabs (1) + C Moves (1) + T Moves (0) + T At'ks (0) = 6

WARPLANS

Move Number 1

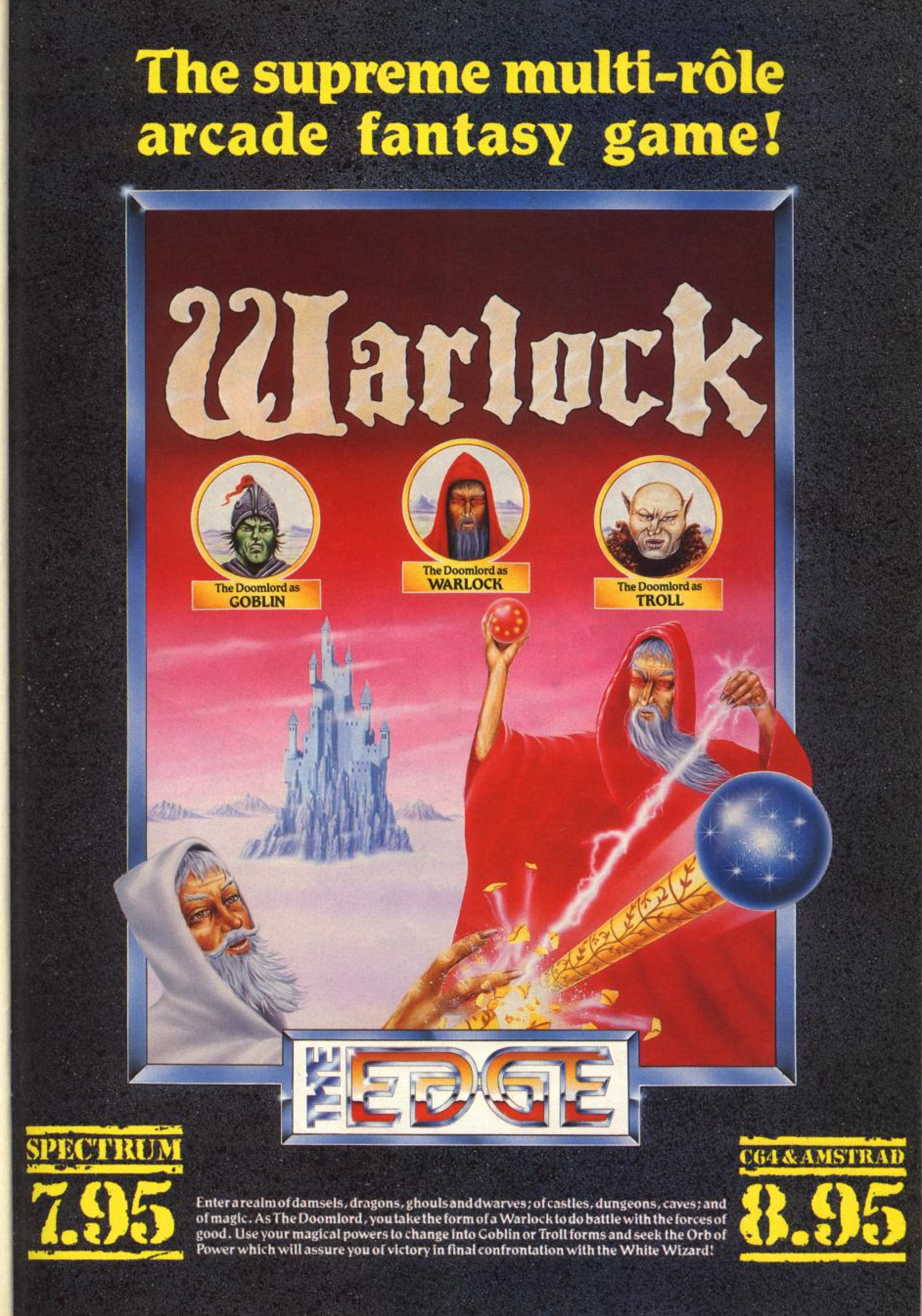
Player	Source	Units To Move A N I T	Units Moved A N I (T)	Tyrant Attack	Naval Route	Dest	Units After Move A N I T (T)	Cost
1	13	1a	1a	---		5	3a	?
2	28	1a	1a	---		42	1a	1
2 **	43	1a	1a	---		42	See Above	0
3	20	1a 1n	1a 1n	---	2446	21	1n	1
4	36	2a	2a	---		54	4a 1n	1
4 **	37	1n	1n	---	2032	54	See Above	0
5	79	3a T	3a T	YES		64	3a T	2
6	75	1a 1n	1a 1n	---	1630	56	T	1
7	57	1a	1a	---		56		1
7 **	76	2n	2n	---	1632	56	See Above	0
8	62	2a	2a	---		78	5a 1n T	?
8 **	63	2a	2a	---		78	See Above	0
9	85	1a	1a	---		70	2a T	1
10	86	1a 1n 1j T	1a 1n 1j T	YES	2327	71	1a 1n 1j T	2
11	112	4a	4a	---		111	8a T	1
11 **	125	4a T	4a T	N/R		111	See Above	1
12	111	2a 1n T	2a 1n T	YES	2721	117	2a 1n T	2
13	134	1a	1a	---		129	2a	1
14	150	1a	1a	---		144	2a 2j	1
16	133	2n	2n	---	2212	129	2n T	1
15 **	138	1a 1n	1a 1n	---	2210	129	See Above	0



BRENDON'S BRIEF GUIDE TO THE MAJOR BRITISH PBM COMPANIES

HARROW POSTAL GAMES, 161 Butler Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 4DX
ICBM, PO Box 94, Bath Street, Walsall, West Midlands.
JADE GAMES, PO Box 54, Southsea, PO4 ONA
KJC GAMES, PO Box 11, Cleveleys, Blackpool, Lancs, FY5 2UL
LEGEND INC LTD, 38 Overton drive, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex, RM6 4EA
LOREWARDEN GAMES, 23 Breckhill Road, Woodthorpe, Nottingham
MITRE GAMES, 189 Balham High Road, London, SW12
ORION GAMES, 6 St Austell Road, Manchester, M16 8QW
PHOENIX GAMES, Stoneleigh, Holly Lane, Upper Ellwood, Coleford, Glos, GL16 7LZ
RAMPAGE GAMES, 37 Beechwood, Woodlesford, Leeds, LS26 8PQ
SLOTH ENTERPRISES, Freepost, PO Box 82, Southampton, hants, SO9 7FG
SPELLBINDING GAMES, PO Box 33, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 0EB
VENGEANCE GAMES, 6 Rose Farm Fold, Altofts, Normanton, West Yorks
VORCON GAMES, 59 Juniper, Birch Hill, Bracknell, Berks, RG12 4ZG

These are some of the best established PBM companies in Britain. There are many others, and hopefully we'll be encountering them all in later issues. Readers from outside of the UK may be interested to note that these companies also cater for you!



The supreme multi-rôle arcade fantasy game!
Warlock
The Doomlord as GOBLIN
The Doomlord as WARLOCK
The Doomlord as TROLL
THE EDGE
SPECTRUM
7.95
C64 & AMSTRAD
8.95
Enter a realm of damsels, dragons, ghouls and dwarves; of castles, dungeons, caves; and of magic. As The Doomlord, you take the form of a Warlock to do battle with the forces of good. Use your magical powers to change into Goblin or Troll forms and seek the Orb of Power which will assure you of victory in final confrontation with the White Wizard!



TWO NEW SPORTS SIMULATIONS FROM EPYX
STREET SPORTS BASEBALL
The Pitcher winds, throws, crack! Its a long fly ball to... bang... right into the catcher's mitt. To make a home run you'll have to cope with makeshift diamond bases, made from sparetyres and trashcans, bushes, rocks even squealing cars. Not to mention 16 neighbourhood players – each with their own personalities and skills in pitching, hitting and fielding. With the right combination you could be the champs. With the wrong combination the chumps. You'll pick the place, the team, the positions, the strategy and then you'll be in the middle of it all. It won't be easy but it's right up your street!
CBM64/128
£14.99 disk
£9.99 cassette
IT'S TOUGH ON THE STREETS
Street Sports Baseball
It's Tough on the Streets
SOME OF THE MOST THRILLING AND ACTION PACKED BASKETBALL AND BASEBALL GAMES TAKE PLACE ON AMERICA'S STREET CORNERS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD BACK LOTS. HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO JOIN IN AND MAKE YOUR TEAM THE CHAMPIONS!
IT'S TOUGH ON THE STREETS
Street Sports Basketball
STREET SPORT BASKETBALL
You'll shoot hoops in dingy alleys, playgrounds, parking lots, occasionally even the suburbs (have fun dribbling on the lawn). You'll pick your three-strong team from the 10 toughest players in the neighbourhood. There's hot shooters and slow dribblers. Team players and show offs. There's guys who can shoot the eye out of a needle at 20 feet and guys who couldn't sink one if they were sitting on the backboard. Pass on the run, pop 'em in from the corners, take a hookshot, a tip in. But don't dribble through the oil slick and for heavens sake watch out for the windows!
CBM 64/128, AMSTRAD
£14.99 Disk
£9.99 Cassette
SPECTRUM 48/128K £9.99 Cassette
Coming Soon
EPYX
U.S. GOLD All American Software
U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX. Tel: (021) 356 3388

ANOTHER DAY AT THE ARCADES.

Are you reading this on the beach? If you are, get off your lazy butt and go find yourself an arcade. After all, ZZAP! have just spent hours finding out what new coin-op machines you're likely to find in arcades up and down the country. Julian Rignall and Steve Jarratt leaped into a handy Red XR2 and, stopping only for a quick nosh at the Happy Eater, zoomed all the way up the M6 to the Joyland showrooms in Knutsford. Here's what they saw . . .



SUPER HANG-ON



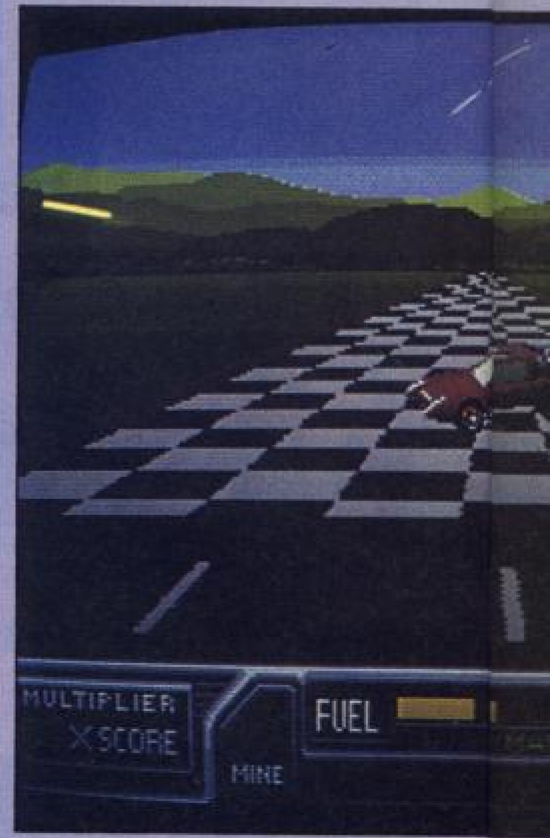
► Engines roaring, the contestants prepare to tackle the American course

Roaring into your local arcade in a shower of dust and rubber comes Sega's new mean machine – the latest and greatest motorcycle racing game, *Super Hang-On*. This sequel to the highly successful *Hang-On* features improved graphics, hills and bumps, four tunes, four different courses and a turbo booster.

Play starts with the prompt to choose between Beginner, Junior, Senior and Expert levels. These comprise courses of 6, 10, 14 and 18 tracks which are raced across Asia, Africa, America and Europe respectively. When the level is selected the screen prompts four tunes, one of which is then chosen to blast out of the machine's twin speakers.

Pulling back on the throttle accelerates the cycle, causing it to burn down the track at an alarming rate. When 280 km/h is reached, the speedometer flashes red, informing the player that the 'turbo' button next to the throttle is ready to be pressed. Doing so sends the cycle rocketing down the course at an incredible speed – with the acceleration increasing until the turbo is switched off! The feeling of exhilaration is incredible, and the effect is further enhanced by the handlebars shaking considerably as dangerous speeds are reached.

The graphics are outstanding, with amazing backdrops and use of colour across all levels, and the different tracks add plenty of scope for long-term play. We both thought this to be the best racing game we've ever played – even better than *Out Run*! Look out for this one . . . but make sure that you've got plenty of change.



ROAD BL

TI

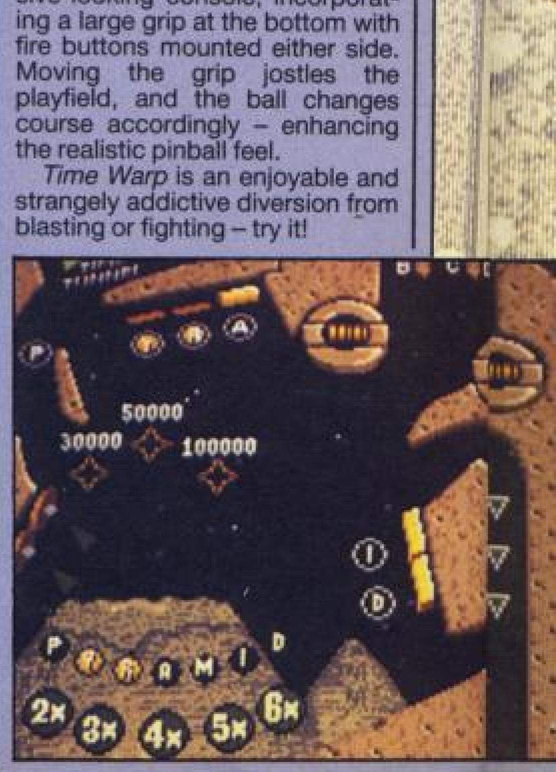
Pinball tables have been with us since the 50's, and now Atari and Sega have joined forces to inject life into the genre with a new video simulation. Purists may think that a video interpretation of a pin table could never recreate the 'feel' of the real thing, but *Time Warp* manages to capture all the thrills and spills of the silver ball, as well as adding new features which couldn't be utilised in a real pinball machine.

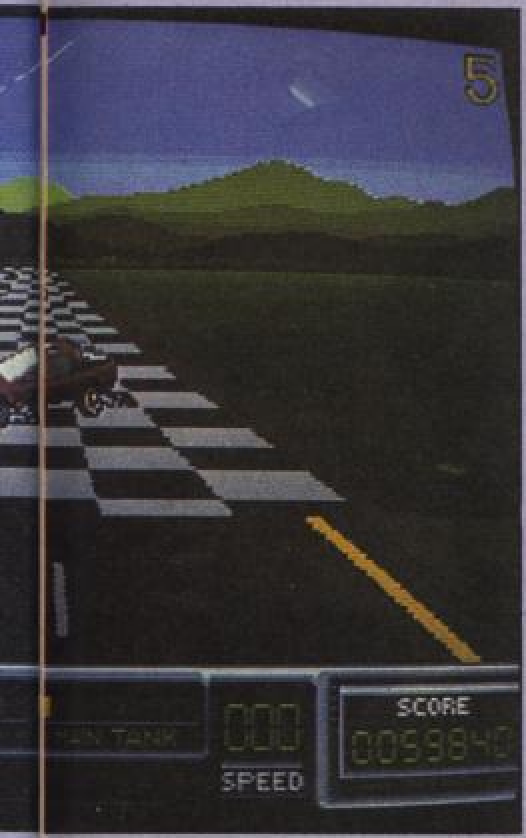
The action takes place over four beautifully drawn scrolling tables, Ruins, Volcano, Saqqara and Final (each with its own distinctive tune), with progression from one level to another achieved by shooting down a 'warp hole'. There are plenty of features, including an amazing multi-ball sequence, and constant surprises and hidden bonuses to keep the player on his toes.

The screen is set into an impressive-looking console, incorporating a large grip at the bottom with fire buttons mounted either side. Moving the grip jostles the playfield, and the ball changes course accordingly – enhancing the realistic pinball feel.

Time Warp is an enjoyable and strangely addictive diversion from blasting or fighting – try it!







▶ The futuristic rally car slews to a halt after crossing the checkpoint line.

LASTERS

Atari's new all-action road racing game comes in two formats – a stand-up System I console, and a very long and distinctive sit-in cabinet. The player takes control of an incredible hi-tech car with front-mounted twin blasters, and takes part in a rally of the future.

The race is split into different sections, with the end of each level marked by a checkpoint which must be reached before fuel runs out. Heavily armoured Cars, Jeeps, turbo-charged Stingers and roadside Gun Emplacements try to stop you reaching your objective – this is where your blasters come in handy. Extra weaponry comes from a support craft which flies in at regular intervals and drops a module on top of the car. Cruise missiles, UZ cannon and an Electro Shield add deadly firepower, while Nitro Injection increases the top speed and acceleration of the car by a frightening amount.

Diminishing fuel supplies are replenished by running over the red and green fuel pods which appear at regular intervals – the supply is also completely topped up when a checkpoint is reached.

The combination of racing and blasting works superbly, and the amazing graphics and sound generate a great feeling of exhilaration and excitement – especially in the sit-in version.



▶ A giant robot bars the way – what now?

BIONIC COMMANDOS

This multi-directionally scrolling Capcom coin-op scores very highly in the 'cute' stakes, as the Bionic Commandos in question are two fresh-faced soldiers equipped with blasters and bionic arms. Their objective is to penetrate enemy lines, and to achieve the ultimate aim of destroying the enemy fortress – a task which requires the negotiation of a series of increasingly difficult levels.

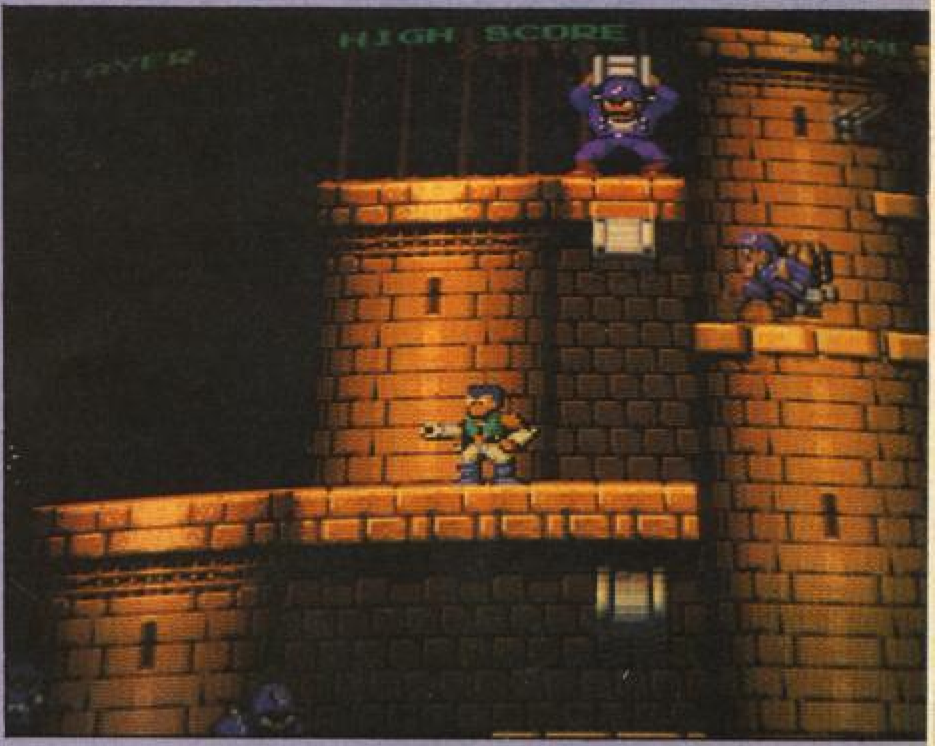
The mission begins in a dense forest, with enemy soldiers attacking from the outset. Opponents vary from Grunts – destroyed by one laser blast – to Commanders, who absorb a number of hits before dying. Later levels feature soldiers in fantastic exo-skeletons (not unlike the Scout Walkers in Return of the Jedi), and huge, brilliantly animated robots which rise to a height of several screens.

The bionic arms come in handy when climbing. A press of the fire button shoots a metal rope which is then used to swing on. Should the player want to climb, the fire button retracts the arm and takes the Commando upwards with it.

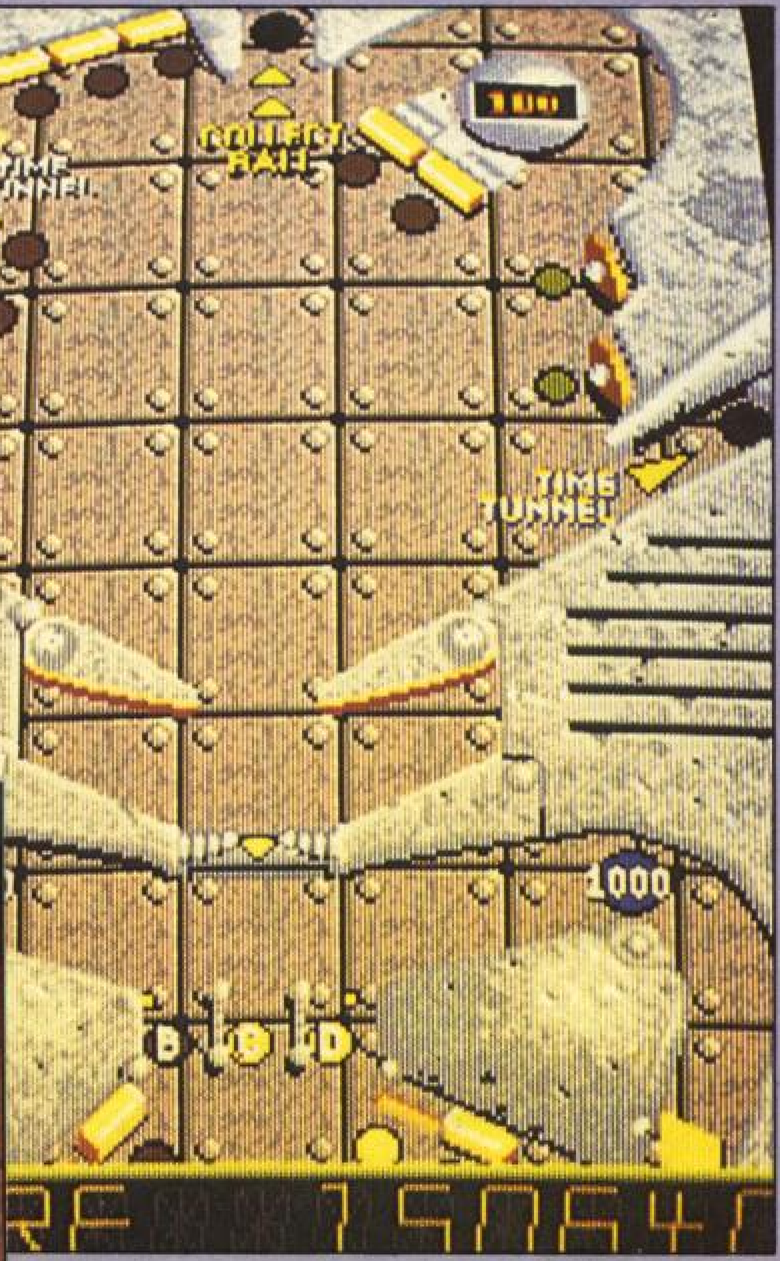
When the forest is negotiated, the commandos undergo a hazardous climb up the front of the searchlight-swept fortress. They then negotiate a series of rat-infested sewers before assaulting the inside of the castle itself.

Bionic Commandos is quite difficult, and will probably require plenty of practice – however, it's well worth the time and money! Nobody has yet announced that they have the computer conversion rights, which is a shame – it would make a brilliant 64 game! ▶

▶ The heroic Commando ponders where to go next – the way upward seems blocked.

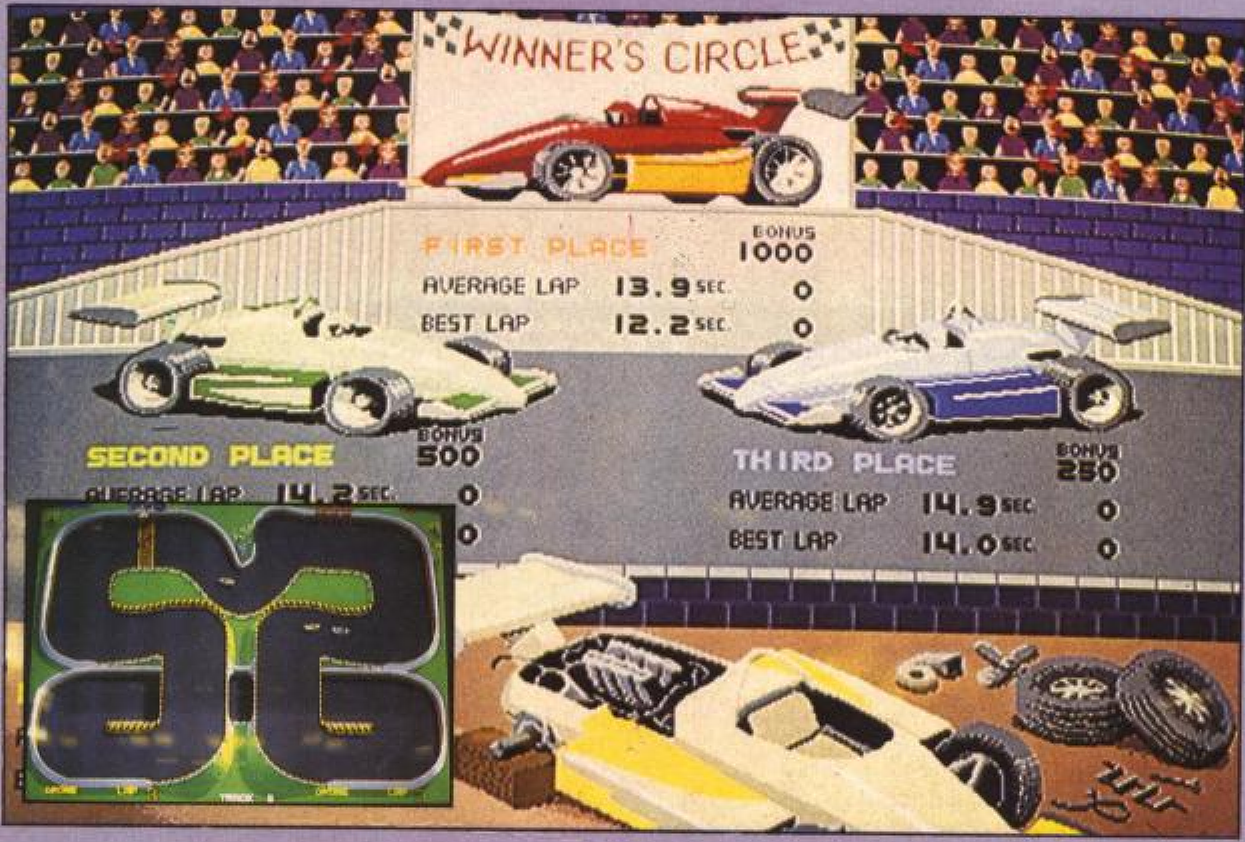


TIME WARP





CHAMPIONSHIP SPRINT



This one, two or three-player Atari race game is quite old, but has just been re-released with a new set of tracks and two tweaks to the gameplay – the removal of the extra score facility and the addition of a fast helicopter. There are 12 increasingly difficult tracks to race over, with the sequence beginning again when the twelfth has been completed.

The entire track is viewed from above, with four tiny racers participating. A race is played over four laps, and the rule is simple . . . 'winner stays on'. Throughout the race, spanners appear on the road and are picked up when run over. When three are collected the player is given the opportunity to add an extra feature to his car – these include extra traction, turbo speed and faster acceleration. There are five levels to each feature, and a car with all 15 is one mean street machine.

Electric Dreams have just about completed their conversion of this highly enjoyable and playable game – but whether it achieves the playability of the arcade version remains to be seen.

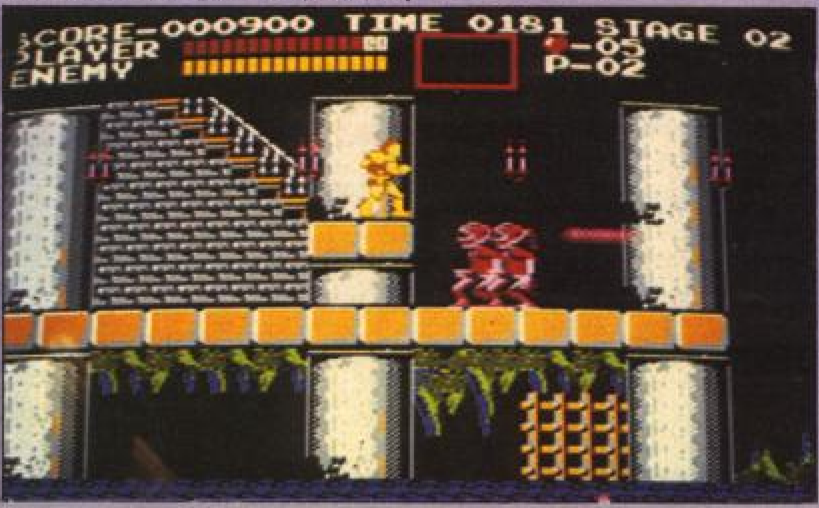
NINTENDO PLAYCHOICE 10 I AND II

These novel machines give the player a finite amount of time per coin to play any combination of the ten games on offer. Having quenched the machine's monetary thirst, the player chooses a game and plays until the allotted time expires (instructions are available on each game, although precious time is wasted by reading them). A warning is given when time is running out, allowing the action to be extended by the insertion of more money.

The interesting thing about both Nintendo Playchoice 10 machines is that all the games involved have appeared on the Nintendo games console in Japan and America, and have been perfectly converted. This machine could therefore be used by Nintendo console owners to playtest a game before purchase, or even to preview things to come!

Nintendo Play 10 I offers a great deal of choice. Three of the games involve shooting (*Duck Hunt*, *Hogan's Alley* and *Wild Gunman*), and utilise the machine's front-mounted light gun to provide plenty of fun (especially when played with friends). Arcade action is provided by the incredibly playable *Super Mario Bros*, the fun-filled *Excitebike* and *Gradius*, the perfect *Nemesis* clone, while sports fans are catered for by the inclusion of *Tennis* and *Golf*. All of the above (with the exception of *Gradius*), are currently available for the Nintendo games console.

The second machine is purely arcade-orientated, with games ranging from sport to shoot 'em up. *Trojan* and *Rush 'n' Attack* (a byte-for-byte copy of the ever-popular *Green Beret*) are very playable, and *Track and Field*, a straightforward copy of the Taito's original joystick-waggling arcade machine, also provides fun for a while. *Golf* is a pleasant diversion from blasting and adventuring, but it's straight back to the action with a faithful version of Capcom's *1942*. The less memorable games are *Metroid*, *Super Start Force*, *Lunar Ball* and *Bomber Man*, which only provide a limited amount of fun.



KARNOV

Data East's colourful shoot 'em up adventure, *Karnov*, is very much in the vein of the classic *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*. The scenario sees the player take control of Karnov, a hero with bulging physique and athletic abilities, guiding him across a hazard-filled, horizontally scrolling landscape.

The object is to battle all the way to the castle and confront King Nasty, who is creating havoc and generally making Karnov's people unhappy. Along the way, Karnov is accosted by flying Gremlins, sword-wielding Zombies, enormous Dragons and animated Statues which hurl giant rocks (which actually look like giant ginger nut biscuits). The hero defends himself with an unlimited supply of rocks, sometimes taking more than one shot to despatch an enemy. Along the way to the head honcho's domain, objects are found and picked up to add to Karnov's abilities.

Fans of *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* are well catered for by this highly playable coin-op. The only slight fault is that there's really nothing new on offer to hold your interest for long periods.

► **A giant statue proves too much for poor old Karnov, who gracefully expires.**



Other video goodies to watch out for include Atari's fabulous spy thriller/arcade adventure, *Rolling Thunder*, the tiring but immensely playable *Combat School*, *R-Type* (a *Nemesis*-style shoot 'em up which knocks the pants off the opposition) and *Double Dragon*, an exceptionally vile beat 'em up! Watch out for reports on these in forthcoming issues.

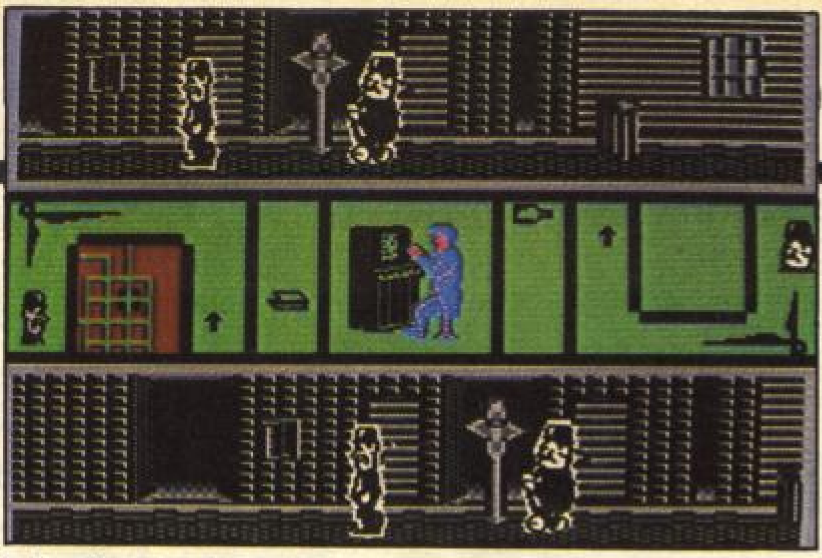
Many thanks to Bob Underhill at Joyland, Knutsford for his invaluable help in compiling this feature.



REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE?
RENEGADE
FEAR.
JUVES
SPECTRUM 7·95
COMMODORE 8·95
AMSTRAD COMMODORE 12·95 DISK
AMSTRAD 14·95 DISK
ATARI ST 19·95
TAITO
COIN-OP
Licensed from © Taito Corp. 1986
Programmed for Amstrad, Spectrum,
Commodore by Imagine Software.
PAUSED
Imagine
...the name of the game
In the knife-edge world of the vigilante there is no place to rest, no time to think – but look sharp – there is always time to die! From the city subways to the gangland ghettos you will always encounter the disciples of evil whose mission it is to exterminate the only man on earth who dares to throw down the gauntlet in their path – the Renegade. A breathtaking conversion of the arcade hit by Taito now for your home computer. With all the original play features. PLAY RENEGADE...PLAY MEAN!
IMAGINE SOFTWARE · 6 CENTRAL STREET
MANCHESTER · M2 5NS · TELEPHONE 061 834 3939 · TELEX 669977

LAUREL AND HARDY

Advance, £9.95 cass, joystick only



▶ Together at last, the whacky twosome continue their adventure

Stan and Ollie have fallen out again folks. Stan got in the way of a custard pie thrown by Ollie, and now he's out for revenge!

Before the chase commences, you have the option of altering the game settings for one or two players, specifying the controls for each character and also setting the number of flans that need to be successfully thrown to win the game.

The chase is displayed using three displays: one each for the two main characters (in glorious monochrome), and an information panel showing the state of the current game.

The two characters initially appear outside a map shop where a map of the city is purchased. Once bought, the map is shown in the central display panel and scrolls as the character moves.

The aim of the game is to guide your character around town to the pie shop, buy flans and then find your opponent a chuck them in his face.

Thundering through the streets and alley is tiring, and this is shown by the colour of their faces in the display panel. Finding and entering a pub refreshes the whacky pair, and discovering a bicycle helps them to negotiate the town more speedily.



I'm afraid that fans of the classic comedy duo (which includes me by the way) have very little to laugh about over this latest Advance release. Comedy is a very difficult concept to portray in something as inflexible as a computer game and Laurel and Hardy fails miserably. Indeed the game itself also fails on several counts, most notably the distinct lack of action. As your character whizzes around screen after screen of uninteresting background, a general feeling of disorientation sets in and the large town layout means that it could be ages before the duo meet up again. Take your ten quid, go into Woolies and buy one of the videos of these classic comedies. That way you'll get at least an hour's entertainment rather than none at all.



What has happened to my two favourite comedy film stars? They've been reduced to playing parts in an absolutely awful Spy Vs Spy clone which is devoid of excitement, action and addiction. The gameplay is hopelessly unbalanced, with hours of fruitless searching to be endured before a pie is found, and another age spent looking for the adversary. When you find him you have about half a second's enjoyment of slinging a pie, before going back to the search. Where has all the spontaneous slapstick of the films gone?

PRESENTATION 81%
Superb range of options, brilliantly presented but flawed by the chronic game structure.

GRAPHICS 56%
Poor characters populate an innovative (but bland) black and white landscape.

SOUND 18%
Pathetic rendition of the Laurel and Hardy theme which seems to have a mind of its own.

HOOKABILITY 31%
The disorientating method of viewing locations soon leads to confusion and disinterest.

LASTABILITY 18%
There's a complete lack of action, which presents an enormous hurdle to even the most avid fan.

OVERALL 17%
Another fine mess that Advance have gotten themselves into.

NIGHT ON THE TILES

Firebird, £7.95 cass, joystick or keys

It's a hard life trying to survive on the streets. Take me for example – if I want to eat, I have to go and get it myself. It's fishbones tonight, and plenty of them. Once I've collected all four fishbones on this block, I can claim it as my territory and move onto the next one.

Mind you, it's no easy task. Owls swoop out of the air and if you don't head-butt them in time, you're dead meat – only eight lives left. Then there's the hedgehogs – I can spit at them, jump them or outrun them. Either way they're to be avoided, because one stick from those spines and its hello to life number seven.

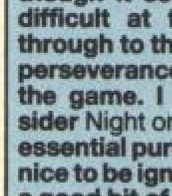
Frogs aren't too much hassle, but don't hang around near one or your energy drops. I also have to take care at the end of the block by old Mr Brown's. He hates cats. If I go up there too early, he'll chuck an old bucket at me and it's goodbye to yet another life!

The final danger, if you can call it that, comes from the fleas. Great brown jumping things they are – let one of them on you and you can't shake it off.

There's plenty of mice scurrying around the block and they provide a decent meal for a peckish tom. I get 'prowl points' for collecting my fishbones and each mouse that I manage to catch – this goes toward my final score for the evening.

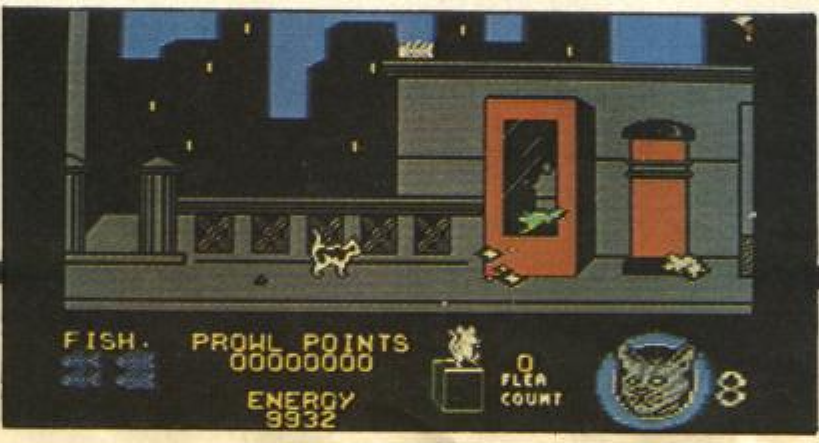


A night on the tiles without the effects of the morning after? Sounds too good to be true. Unfortunately this little experience is only for the feline type. The movement of this particular moggy is very sleek and decidedly cat-like, and the streetscape backgrounds are quite atmospheric. However, the sound effects are fairly basic and switching to the music track offers little improvement to the atmosphere. Ultimately, there is altogether too little depth in the game to retain any lasting interest.



It makes a nice change to take control of animal instead of a droid or a spaceship – especially when they are portrayed as well as this. The animation is absolutely superb, and the sprites look gorgeous. The gameplay is fairly straightforward, and even though it seems a touch too difficult at first, I soon got through to the second level so perseverance is the name of the game. I really don't consider Night on the Tiles to be an essential purchase, but it's too nice to be ignored, and it offers a good bit of fun.

▶ It's cool for cats – out on the prowl, Firebird style



PRESENTATION 54%
Limited options, and the use of the space bar to 'spit' is a nuisance.

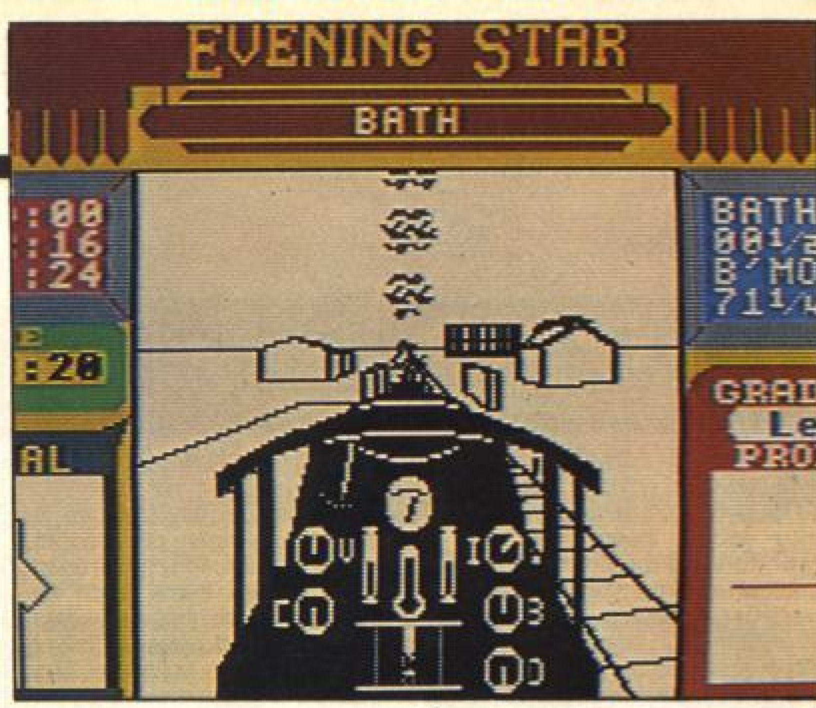
GRAPHICS 93%
Breathtaking sprites and animation.

SOUND 71%
The funky piano soundtrack fits the game well, although the effects are merely adequate.

HOOKABILITY 69%
Initially off-putting but perseverence reaps its own rewards.

LASTABILITY 67%
Getting from block to block provides a fair challenge, although the repetitive gameplay might pall after a while.

OVERALL 78%
The feline equivalent of *Green Beret*, and pretty good fun it is too.



▶ the Evening Star approaches Bath

EVENING STAR

Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, keys only

Following on the tracks of *Southern Belle* comes Hewson's second steam train simulation, *Evening Star*. This legendary locomotive made the run between Bath and Bournemouth on the Somerset and Dorset Line, and this simulation allows you to relive the glory days of steam railway by travelling the same route.

The main screen shows the train's progress as it thunders through exotically named villages, including Wellow, Chilcompton, Henstridge and Binegar. Throughout the journey the timetable should be adhered to, as there are heavy penalties for running late.

Care must also be paid to signals, otherwise a fatal collision could occur. Reckless driving also results in a loss of safety points, or even in the train being derailed.

There are two stops to be made along the route – and overshooting either station loses efficiency points (Bournemouth also includes an extra hazard, as the buffers must be avoided). Failure to brake carefully can also result in a jerky stop, causing the passengers to be thrown into each other's laps.

When the train finally chugs into Bournemouth, points are awarded for safety, economy and timekeeping. Can you pass the test?



I can't say that I'm in any way enamoured with Evening Star**, but then I'm not a steam enthusiast either. If you do enjoy steam trains then this simulator might be just what you're looking for. It certainly seems to cover all bases, and has plenty of elements which appeal from a realism point of view. My only real objection is to the fact that this program does not seem to make any technical advances over the achievements of its predecessor. The vector graphics are still appalling, with the update time hovering around the one second mark! If you liked Hewson's last steam train simulator, then check this one out.**



I've only got a passing interest in steam trains, so Evening Star **hardly captured my attention. The gameplay is quite involved, and it takes a fair amount of perseverance to drive the train correctly – and successfully adhering to the timetable is a further challenge! Although the graphics are rather simplistic and slow, there's plenty in this simulation to keep you going. If you're a real train enthusiast,** Evening Star **may well give some pleasurable evenings as you take a simulated steam ride down the line to Bournemouth.**

PRESENTATION 81%
Plenty of options for a wide variety of steaming antics.

GRAPHICS 57%
Purely functional, simplistic vector graphics.

SOUND 32%
Atmospheric spot effects, but little else.

HOOKABILITY 65%
Difficult to get into, but then driving a train isn't easy!

LASTABILITY 64%
Plenty of depth and challenge for the enthusiast who's willing to persevere.

OVERALL 67%
A reasonable simulation which should be popular with train addicts – but not with those who like their action a little faster.



HYSTERIA

Software Projects, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys

Along the corridors of time, a monster stalks. From the depths of antiquity a currently extinct being has been drawn forward through time by a fanatical sect intent on the disruption of Earth's future. As the being materialises in temporal zones where it should never exist, the fabric of time itself becomes strained. If left unchecked, the phenomenon is aggravated to the point where history collapses – taking Mankind's future with it.

A lone survivor of the once elite 'Time Corps' has been enlisted to push the entity back through time and into its own era where it can no longer pose a threat. Armed only with an energy conversion kit, the agent battles his way through three horizontally-scrolling time zones to confront the monster.

The energy conversion kit is used to alter ordinary objects into specific utilities which can be used in the mission. Items such as energy arrows, shields and wings can be produced once sufficient objects have been collected. The available utility is indicated by an arrow over one of the panels at at the bottom of the screen. Pulling down on the joystick and pressing the fire button initiates that item, but the equipment thus gained only lasts a short period of time, so care must be used in selecting the appropriate equipment.

The inhabitants of each era, slightly displeased at the appearance of a futuristic hunter and his hideous quarry, have summoned mythological creatures to dispel the chronological interlopers. These legendary creatures are quickly despatched using the energy weapons, but contact with them depletes the agent's lifeforce. If it is allowed to drop to zero, he explodes into a shower of bubbles and the fate of Mankind is sealed.

Before confronting the monster, a series of clues are found. Statues line walls and are broken when fired upon, revealing a puzzle piece. These fit together to form a portrait of one of the conspirators. When this picture is complete, the monster appears – from here on only a vicious and sustained attack can weaken it sufficiently to force it back through time. When this is achieved, the agent follows the being into the next era to continue his task. When the third battle is completed, the creature is thrown back from whence it came, and mankind is saved!

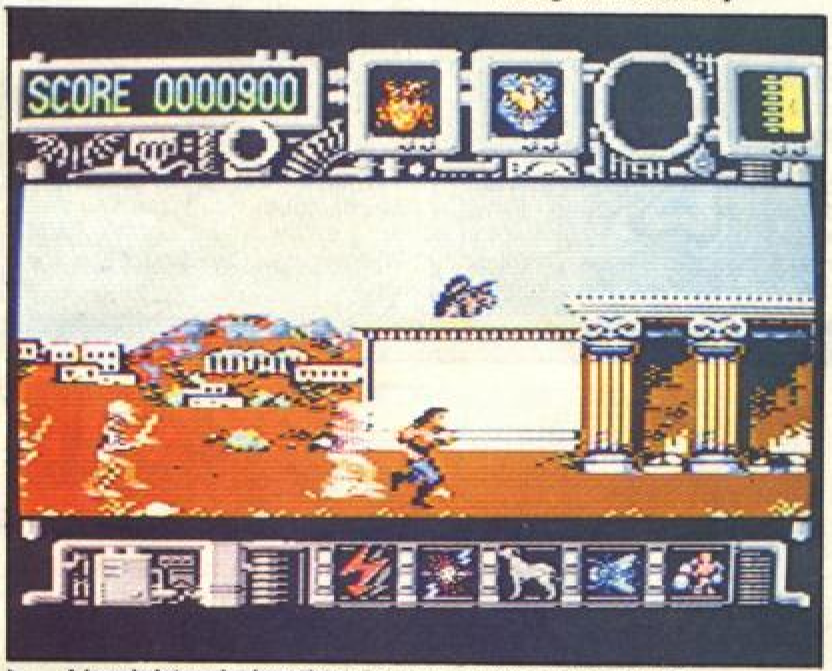


There may be some justification for the argument that Hysteria **offers nothing new, but what's there is really polished and a lot of fun to play. Graphically, this is one of the few games where all of the sprites and backdrops are of an equally high standard – the death of the on-screen character is so pretty that I was almost hoping to die so that I could see it again! The pace is fast and furious, and there's a large amount of exploration and problem-solving to be carried out if the levels are to be successfully conquered. The one minor drawback is the fact that there are only three levels to complete, but the standard of these is so high that this can virtually be ignored.**



Software Projects are once again becoming a force to be reckoned with, and Hysteria **can only continue this trend. It's another treat for the eyes and ears, but look out patience – this one's a real toughie! The graphics are really good, especially the sprites. Minotaurs, horses, harpies and skeletons are all beautifully depicted and the backdrops are splendidly drawn with tremendous use of colour. My only niggle (I have to have one don't I?) is that the game only has three levels and relies on difficulty to stop you finishing it rather than depth. Still, it's a good romp and should keep you occupied for some time.**

► **Sword-wielding skeletons give chase as the hero dashes through an ancient city**



► **A handy jetpack gives the sole survivor of the 'Time Corps' added destructive powers**



Although there are only three levels to battle through, they are difficult enough to pose a long-lasting and enjoyable challenge. Initially, the action is almost too frustrating to be true. Countless times I managed to reach the creature at the end of the first level and died – but I still kept coming back. There's something in the gameplay that really gets you, and you feel that you just have to kill the creature and progress to the next level. Once you get there, it starts all over again!!! The graphics and sound are exceptionally pretty, and work extremely well together to give an impressive effect. Hysteria **is rather off-beat, but it should be checked out if you want a blast with a difference.**



PRESENTATION 89%
Great high-score table and a neat and informative on-screen display.

GRAPHICS 86%
Superb backdrops complemented by effective sprites and gorgeous animation.

SOUND 82%
A stirring soundtrack pushes the player along on his task.

HOOKABILITY 78%
Difficult at first, but always possible.

LASTABILITY 70%
Only three time levels to negotiate – but they should still take some mastering.

OVERALL 83%
An exciting, absorbing and highly visual adventure.

PILE-UP!

Reaktor, £9.99 cass, £12.99 disk, joystick only

Once again Earth is in trouble. Energy reserves are at an all-time low, and new sources are desperately needed. In a remote part of the Universe, a strange phenomenon has been discovered and termed the Pile-Up. This consists of a 16x16 landscape made up of light and dark squares. Many of the light squares are taken up by black marble–like spheres of pure energy – a much needed source of power.

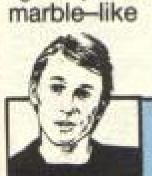
The light squares rise and fall, carrying their host marble with them. As the spheres' height increases, their energy level also changes, indicated by a corresponding alteration in their colour.

The authorities have commissioned a special vessel which can collect the energy stored within the alien constructions. The player pilots of one these craft, and transfers energy from the marbles to the transformer station, ready for transportation back to Earth.

The ship is steered by joystick, and pressing the fire button operates the thrusters, thereby causing it to rise. Releasing the button allows the ship to fall under the influence of gravity. Marbles are picked up by landing exactly on top of them, whereupon the energy is stored in the ship's energy chamber.

Flying to the transformer is by no means safe, as collision with the surrounding landscape results in an energy drain. On reaching the transformer, perfectly aligning the ship results in the energy being automatically transferred.

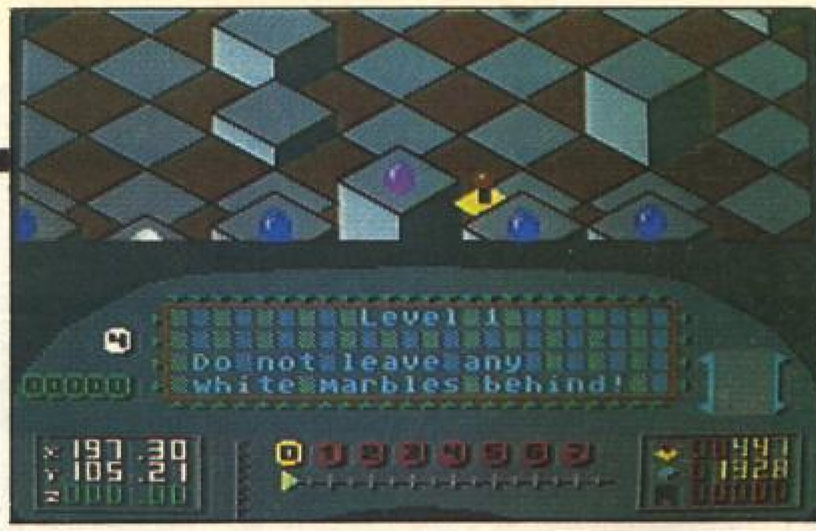
If the on-board power level drops too far, the ship becomes immobilised and your mission ends.



The first thing that struck me about Pile-Up! was the infuriatingly sensitive control method employed in guiding the ship around. I gained some kind of proficiency after a while, but I never felt totally in control of the proceedings. As regards the gameplay, Pile-Up! is little more than an exercise in forced dexterity, with scarce entertainment value and no real lasting appeal. What it does offer is well implemented, but there's just not enough in there.



Unusual control methods are all very well, but when they're as frustrating as this it ruins the game in question. Guiding the ship over the nicely drawn landscape is enjoyable – until you try to land on a sphere. One wrong move and the ship crashes around like a drunken fly, and after a few more seconds it's destroyed. After some practice I managed to start collecting spheres, but playing a game which you know could end because of one wrong move isn't too enjoyable. If Pile-Up!'s control method wasn't so uncompromising then it could have offered a lot of fun, but as it stands the gameplay is a little too finnicky.



► **The aim of the first level of Pile-Up! is plain to see**

PRESENTATION 67%
A good-looking game, let down by inadequate and unhelpful instructions.

GRAPHICS 72%
Sharp and functional throughout.

SOUND 74%
Unusual soundtrack and good effects.

HOOKABILITY 48%
The fiddly control can hardly be described as user friendly.

LASTABILITY 36%
The limited gameplay affords little in the way of lasting challenge . . . or even short-term appeal.

OVERALL 53%
An underdeveloped game, which is more a test of dexterity than a form of entertainment.

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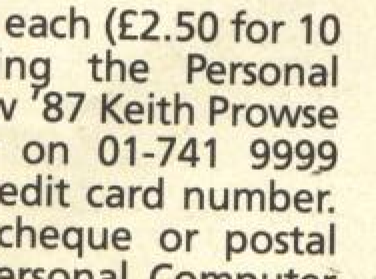
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ZZAP! TEST

ACE 2

Cascade, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

Flying in the trail of the highly successful *Ace* comes *Ace 2*, a two-player head-to-head air combat simulator played over a Middle East scenario. Each player takes control of a hi-tech jet and attempts to shoot down a hostile aircraft (either computer or human controlled), using either cannon fire or heat-seeking missiles.

The action is displayed in first-person 3D, using a horizontally split screen, with player one's viewpoint at the top and player two's below. A panel beneath each screen shows the status of each plane, and displays such information as height, velocity, weapon, pitch, roll and any incoming messages. There's also a radar display showing the location of enemy aircraft within the vicinity.

There is a choice between two scenarios – dogfight or mission. The former pits two pilots against one another in a do-or-die situation. If there's only one player, the computer provides a 20-level adversary.

The action begins when the number of planes per person and the number of missile hits necessary to bring down the aircraft have been chosen. Score is given for a heat-seeking missile on target and accurate cannon fire. When one pilot's fleet of craft have been shot down, the game ends.

The mission scenario requires each pilot to shoot down the opposition's ground installation. Consequently there are two approaches – to defend your own installation by intercepting and shooting down the opposing plane, or to go out and shoot down the enemy installation. The pilot is given a choice between air to ground/sea missiles, long-range



Not being a real fan of the more complex flight simulator, the fact that Ace 2 **allows the player to get straight up in the air and start blasting really appeals to me. There's a fabulous feeling of speed and tension generated from the start, and despite the relative lack of options and controls, the action still demands constant and undivided attention. The computer opponent is a little fearsome (a good deal of practice is needed before a human player can compete), but this game only really comes into its own when played head to head in two-player mode. When played among friends,** Ace 2 **provides fun, spectacle, colour and excitement – what more could you want.**

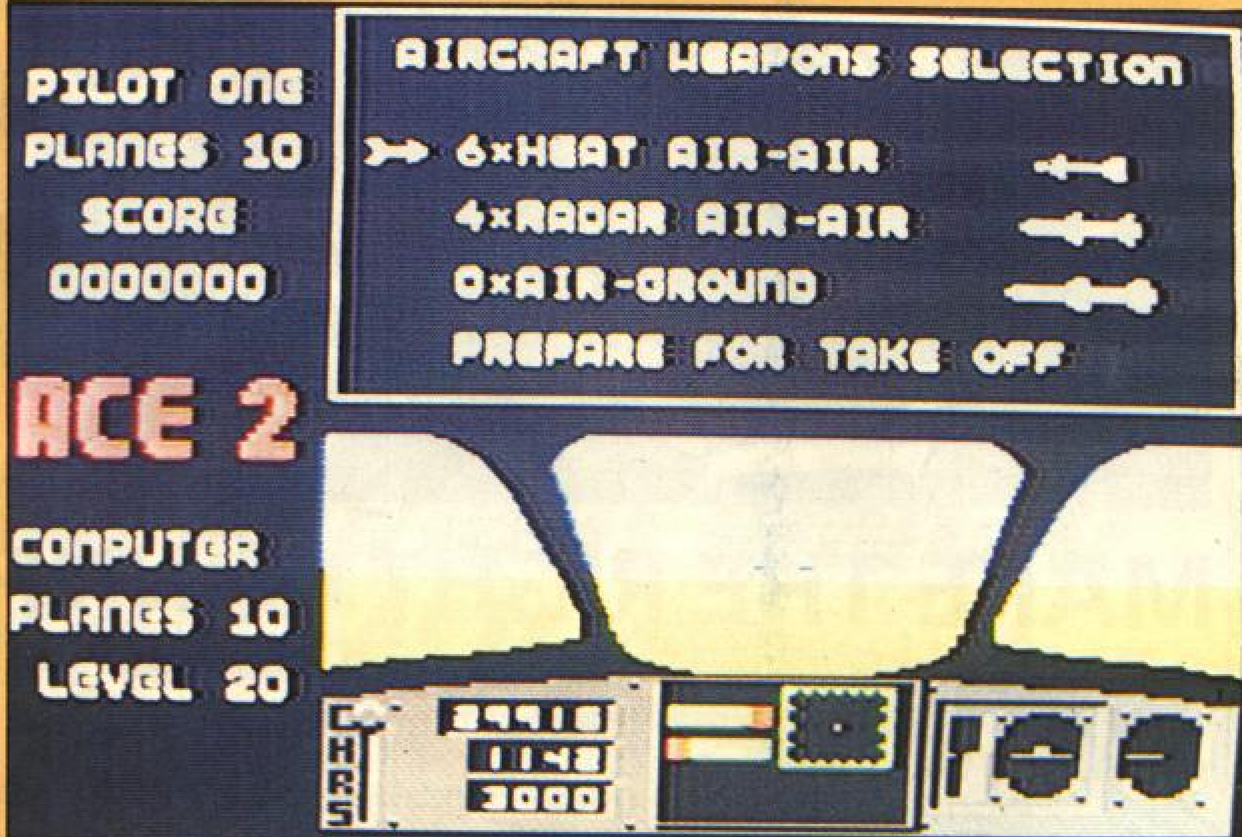


Ace 2 **is certainly no clone of its predecessor – gone are the multiple combat scenarios of** Ace**, and indeed gone are all the vital controls of the plane itself. Page five of the instructions manual quotes a long list of things you needn't worry about while flying your plane, including flaps, rudder and various aerobatic features. Unfortunately, this is its main flaw – the game is oversimplified to the point where it begins to lose some of its value. Combat emulators rely on the feeling of ordered chaos generated by having to control a complex machine, attack the enemy and attempt to stay alive in the process. All that remains for you to do in** Ace 2 **is guide the plane and press the fire button. This does provide a decent, albeit short-lived, challenge against a human opponent, but I'm rather unsure about the difficulty level of the computer – it starts very hard on level one and gets worse. Although this is a good game in its own right, fans of** Ace **could well be a bit disappointed.**

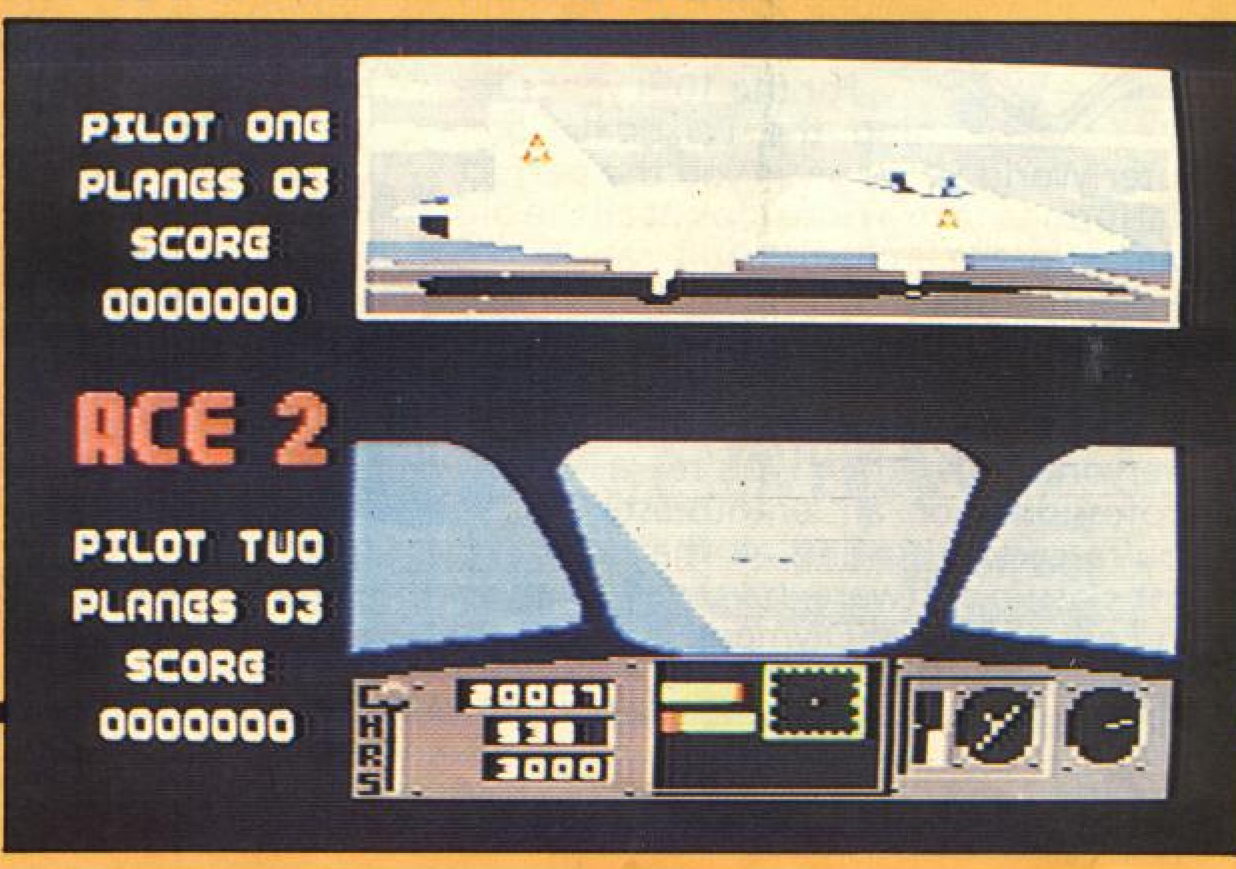


► As player one consults the map, player two roars ahead with his mission

► Pilot one's screen displays the weapons selection screen prior to taking off



► Lovely graphics in Ace 2 combined with realistic air-to-air combat





This sequel to Ace is something of a disappointment. The original was a program with enormous depth, incorporating features such as air-to-air and air-to-ground or sea combat, mid-air refuelling and landing and taking off. By comparison, Ace 2 is decidedly simple, and is more of an arcade game than anything else. There are two basic options – a dogfight scenario or a mission scenario. The dogfight situation is a straightforward one-on-one air combat, and is virtually the same with the addition of each pilot having a ground target to attack or defend. The computer provides a good opponent and should challenge even the most experienced pilot – that's if you can stick the action long enough. After a couple of sessions I found the lack of depth and variety to be Ace 2's stumbling block. Shooting down plane after plane becomes a little tedious, especially as there's nothing else to do. Even the mission scenario is quite limited – there just isn't enough in the action to keep you coming back for more. The two-player mode offers a lot of fun, but if you're likely to be playing Ace 2 solo, avoid it. Buy Ace instead – it's a completely different game.

radar-guided rockets or heat seekers, which are limited to close combat. Because of the rockets' differing weights, the pilot has to think about his approach before arming – once in the air the chosen arms cannot be changed.

The mission ends quite simply when one player has lost all of his planes.

PRESENTATION 90%
A useful series of options, and well laid out screen.

GRAPHICS 78%
Great statics, complemented by slightly simplistic, but fast and colourful action.

SOUND 75%
A great Rob Hubbard tune kicks off – only to be followed by slightly annoying sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 80%
Very straightforward, offering action from the start.

LASTABILITY 72%
Lone flyers may lose interest relatively quickly. However, the two player mode is still enjoyable.

OVERALL 81%
A disappointment after *Ace*, but still enjoyable for budding combat pilots.

LAST MISSION

US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick with keys

You find yourself a lonely outcast, banished from your Galaxy by invading alien forces. However there is light at the end of the tunnel – if you can infiltrate the aggressor's starbase and destroy their headquarters, your people will be released and you will be free to return home. This is a mission of honour . . . and it could be your last.

The mission begins over the first alien landscape, scrolling beneath your ship in eight directions. Guiding your ship across the region's 16 sectors, you destroy as many of the land-based targets and attack craft as possible.

A fleet of four ships is made available to complete the mission, and these explode on contact with enemy fire, ships or installations.

The ship is equipped with state of the art weaponry – including five smart bombs – and picks up extra armament from the remains of ground targets which have been destroyed. A round token appears bearing a letter corresponding to the item of equipment carried – crossing this installs the hardware onto the craft. Each item lasts for a specific amount of time, indicated by a small bar timer below the main screen.

A scanner is displayed at the bottom of the screen showing the remaining ground units. Alongside is a decreasing energy bar which signals the damage inflicted on the enemy forces. When this has completely disappeared the guardian mothership enters – the destruction of which allows access to the next landscape.



This latest offering from the Data East/US Gold relationship is a bit on the poor side. The ship control is slightly clumsy – I would have preferred a rotate left/rotate right/forward control rather than the 'point in the direction that you want to go' method used here – and just to make things even more difficult, the collision detection tends to favour the alien vessels. Another drawback is that you can destroy all of the ground targets, only to die while attacking the guardian mothership – then, on restarting, the alien's urban renewal project has sprung into operation and all the previously destroyed buildings and installations are back in one piece! Last Mission has all the ingredients of an enjoyable game, however it is sadly lacking in refinement.

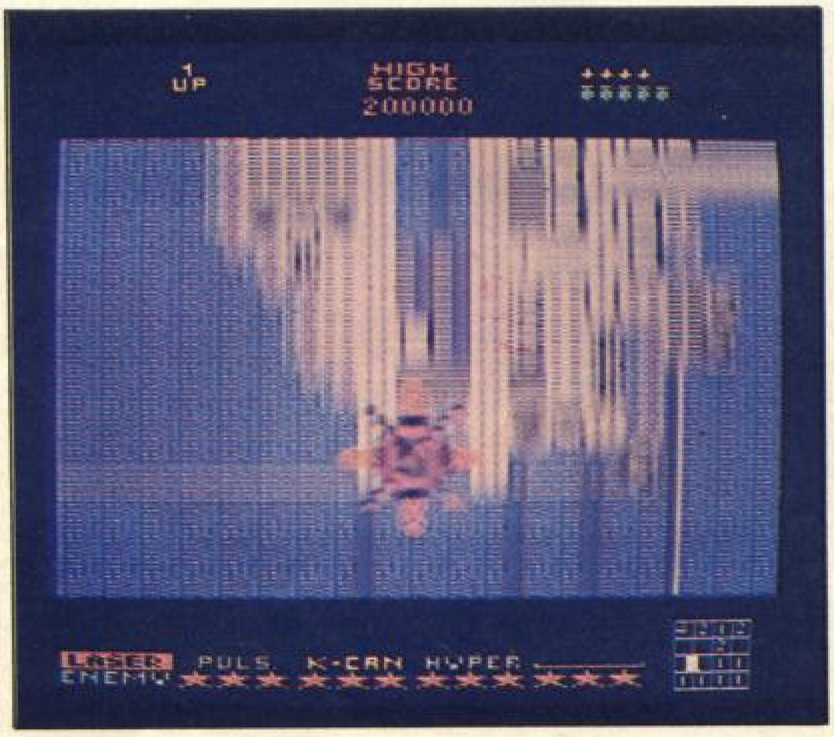


My initial impressions of this game weren't favourable, mainly due to the shoddy graphics and diabolical introductory sequence. To make matters even worse, the flat, bland backdrops are awful, and the aimlessly flitting sprites look really grotty. The gameplay isn't that bad though, and that's the most important thing. Once you get into it, the blasting action becomes quite addictive, and I found myself returning to it quite a few times to see whether I could get a little further. The awkward presentation and long wait between games is incredibly annoying, but otherwise the Last Mission proves to be a mildly compelling shoot 'em up.



The programming house involved with this conversion should be sharply rapped across the knuckles, as they obviously have no idea of presentation. At the start of each game a long introduction has to be endured before the action begins, and another long end piece and a very clumsy high-score table are the penalty for finishing the mission. It would be nice if you could have the option to skip this awful rigmarole every time. The graphics lack crispness and definition and there are some annoying quirks in the gameplay which rankle and ultimately spoil the limited fun that's on offer. If you're after a shoot 'em up, shop around – the market is full of them and there are plenty better than this.

▶ **Before the mission begins, you're treated to a glimpse of the Guardian Mothership which must be defeated at the end of each level**



PRESENTATION 41%
Sparse options and inadequate documentation. There's also an annoying delay between games while a pointless message is slowly typed on screen.

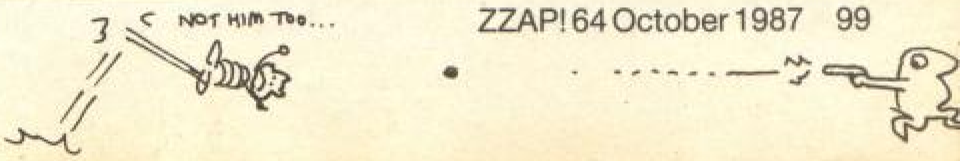
GRAPHICS 59%
The smoothly scrolling backdrops are detailed but unimaginative, and the tiny sprites also seem to lack any sort of graphical inspiration.

SOUND 60%
The option to choose between tune or effects makes little difference.

HOOKABILITY 63%
The awkward control method causes slight confusion at first – persevere however, and it's soon mastered.

LASTABILITY 42%
The lack of compulsive action makes the faults in the gameplay even more annoying.

OVERALL 49%
An average arcade conversion which doesn't ever approach its full potential.




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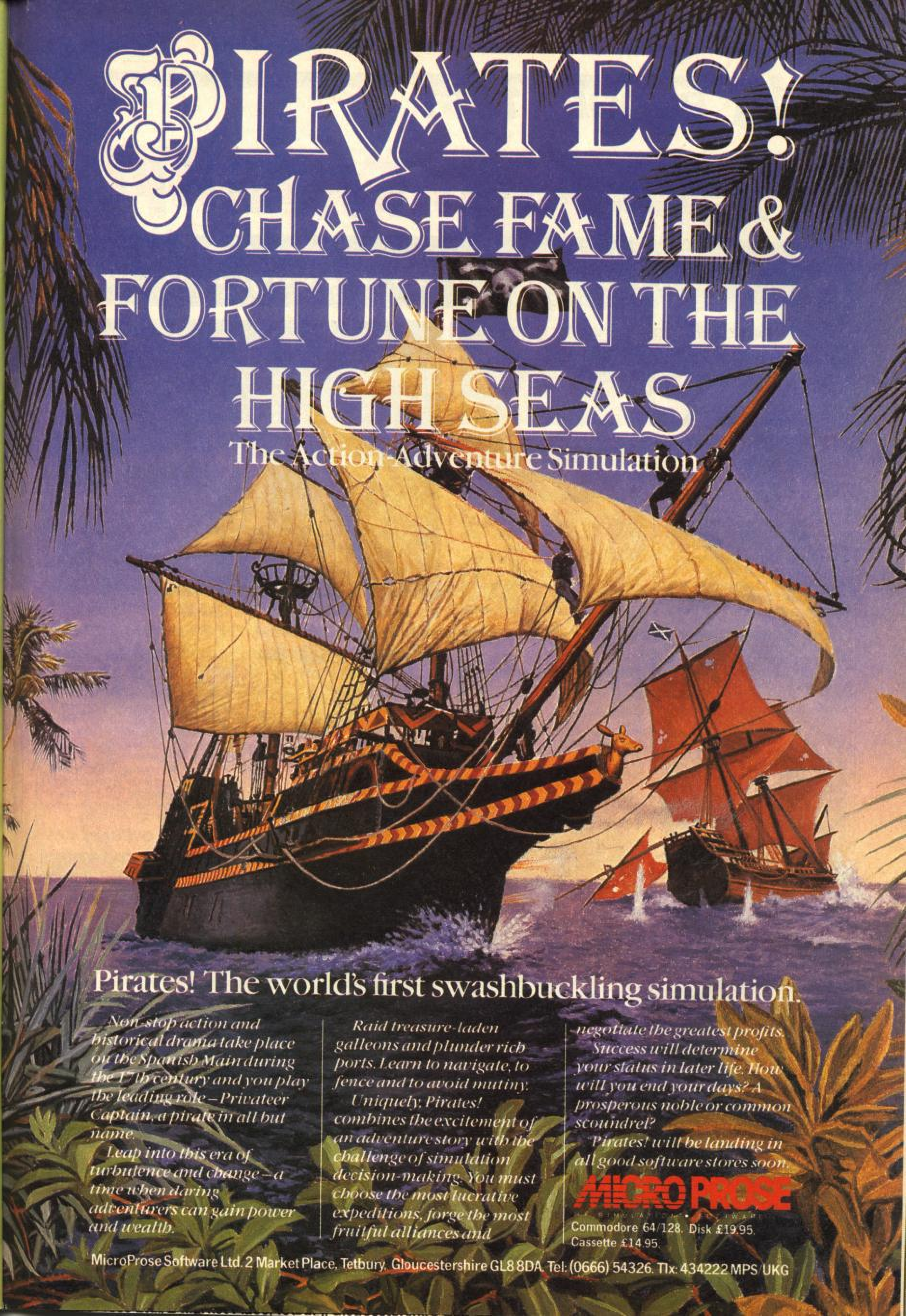
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CHEAP AND CHEERFUL

ZZAP!'s monthly round-up of budget software

Recent months have seen a huge increase in the volume of new budget releases entering the market. This new ZZAP! feature is designed to keep you up to date on these releases, and give a short summary of the quality of software available at the cheaper end of the market. This month, Julian Rignall casts his beady eye at the latest on the budget scene.

AZTEC CHALLENGE
Top Ten, £1.99

In this, one of US Gold's first ever games, the player assumes the role of an Aztec who has just been chosen for a human sacrifice. His only chance of survival is to escape by enduring a series of seven survival tests.

Each of the tests takes the form of a separate game, and long and difficult they are too! Dodging spears, leaping over pools and negotiating traps are all part and parcel of this survival romp through ancient South America. The graphics and animation are laughably bad, but *Aztec Challenge* is oddly enjoyable – mostly due to the silly plot and addictive gameplay!

OVERALL 72%

BOULDERDASH/ BOULDERDASH II
Prism, £2.99

The evergreen *Boulderdash* games have been a firm favourite ever since the first release some three years ago, and their star, Rockford, has made regular appearances on these hallowed pages ever since. Now Prism has re-released the first two games in the series at a budget price.

Rockford's task sees him travel through a series of boulder-filled caves collecting diamonds – a dangerous task which involves solving fiendish puzzles and avoiding the cave's denizens.

Both *Boulderdash* I and II offer incredible addiction and playability which are unequalled in this range of the market. Go out and buy these two marvellous classics NOW!

OVERALL 96%

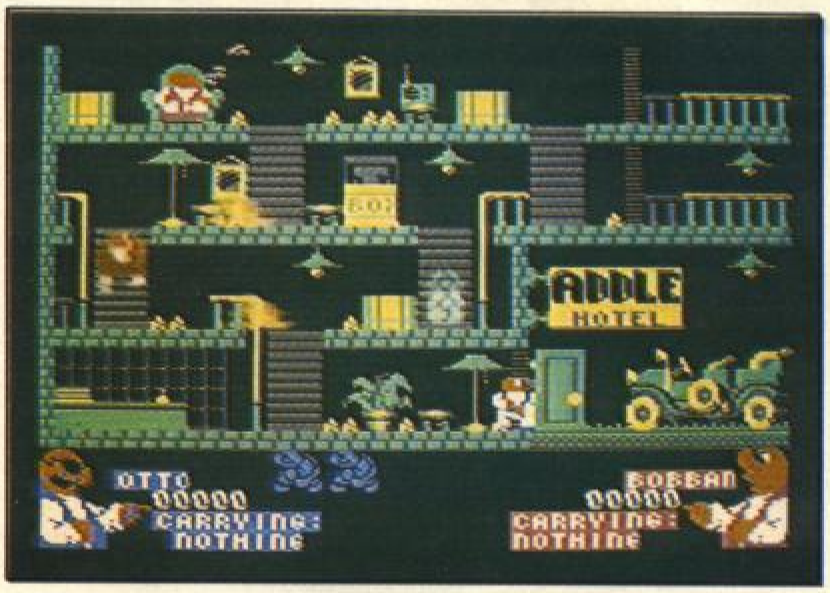
CLEAN-UP SERVICE
Players, £1.99

Those whacky pair of cleaners, Bobban and Otto are back again to create havoc on your Commodore. Their cleaning firm, Clean-Up Service, has just been assigned the task of keeping Addle Hotel spotless – a cue for a game if ever I saw one!

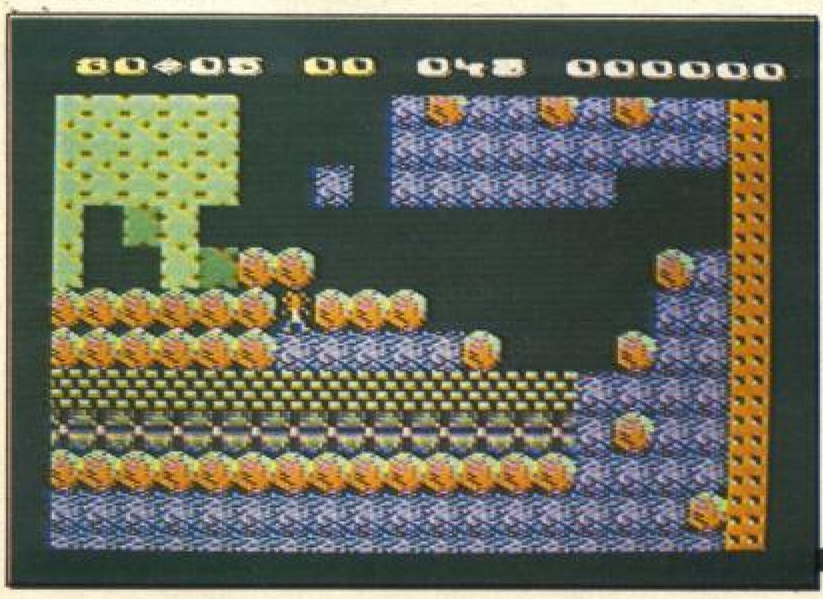
One or two players can play, guiding the heroes around a series of platform screens and clearing lumps of dirt as they go. Mutant rubbish gives chase – irradiating the two cleaners if not destroyed.

The action is pretty frenetic, and is almost overwhelming in single player mode. The two player option has plenty of scope for laughs, and great graphics and sound provide the finishing touches to this pleasurable platform game.

OVERALL 80%



► Bobban snoozes as Otto cleans up Addle hotel



► Looks like Rockford got trapped on his way back from the margin to superstardom

COSMONUT
Code Masters, £1.99

'Five amazing games in one' boasts the cassette inlay . . . but 'Five amazingly average screens in one' would be a little more appropriate. *Cosmonut* puts you in control of a little spaceman who has entered the maze-like head of an enormous robot. The mission is to destroy it by draining its power, a task requiring the completion of a series of three sub-games. When all are completed, the spaceman meets the robot for a final confrontation.

The graphics are very bland and sound isn't anything special. If a little more thought had been put into the sub-games *Cosmonut* could have been fun, but the three games bear little repetition and quickly become predictable and dull.

OVERALL 46%

DEATH RACE
Atlantis, £1.99

Now here's a chance to reminisce, with this somewhat poor version of the eight year old racing game, *Turbo*.

The objective is to race along a straight road, attempting to overtake 70 cars within an 80 second time limit. Contact with other racers proves fatal, with the race ending after three crashes. If 80 cars are passed before the limit expires, a bonus is awarded and the race continues along a more congested road.

The archaic gameplay, graphics and sound provide an element of fun (mostly at the programmers expense), but the repetitive racing quickly bores.

OVERALL 40%

DELIVERANCE
The Power House, £1.99

Jim and Bob are the names of an unlikely pair of robots who've just volunteered to rescue a Princess. One or two players participate, guiding the intrepid duo over a series of horizontally scrolling landscapes.

The screen scrolls at a constant speed as the robots climb and jump – consequently, slowing down and allowing the scrolling to catch up results in their destruction. Life removing aliens roam the landscape, making the task just that little bit harder.

The robot's plodding pace tends to make the game frustrating, and consequently there's very little instant reward. *Deliverance* could well give amusement on a rainy Sunday afternoon, but otherwise . . .

OVERALL 43%

DESTRUCTO
Bulldog, £1.99

The evil Dr Destructo is building a fleet of ships, and is about to sally forth and conquer the world. Luckily for us the airforce have got wind of his plans and are sending a fleet of planes to destroy the ships before they embark.

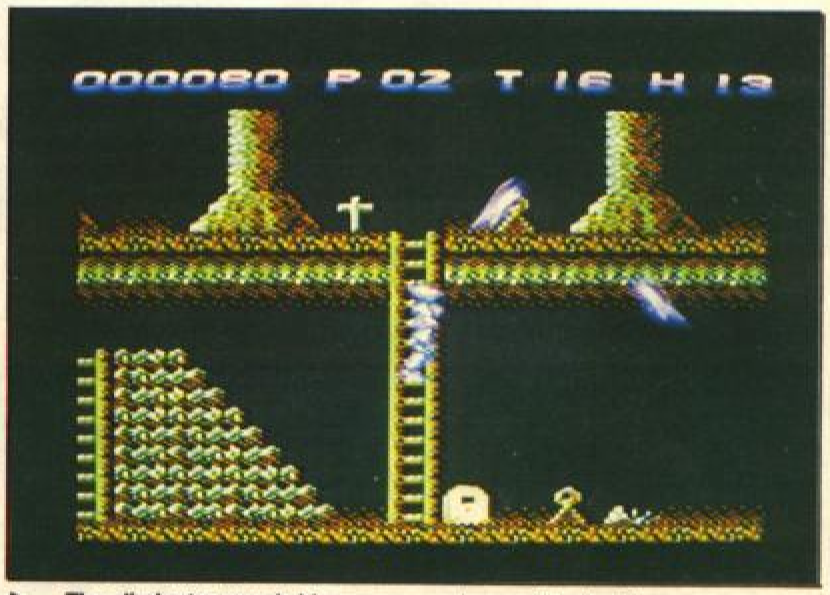
One or two players fly their craft over the ships, shooting down as many of the defending planes as possible. Shooting a defender causes it to crash down to the ship's surface – damaging the hull on contact. Cause enough damage and the ship sinks, allowing the player to progress to the next vessel.

Although the action is repetitive, it's absurd enough to be enjoyable – especially with two players.

OVERALL 61%



▶ **A pitched battle ensues over one of Dr Destructo's ships**



▶ **The eliminator wends his weary way deeper into the dungeons**

ENFORCER
The Power House, £1.99

For some strange reason, this is very reminiscent of the arcade game *Trojan*... yet it plays nothing like it. The player takes the role of a robot who enters a series of scrolling underground caverns to dispose of all the denizens. The mission starts out easy, but soon gets pretty tough as the deeper caverns are reached.

The Enforcer is by no means a classic, but it looks good, is addictive and offers plenty of scope for long-lasting play. The main sprite and some of the caves are nicely drawn, although the hostiles are a bit of a let-down in this department. At two quid it's a good buy, and there's even a free audio track on the 'B' side!

OVERALL 74%

ARCADE CLASSICS
Firebird, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys



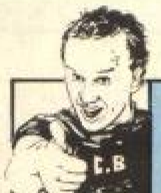
Those of you who have a secret yearning for the good old days of 10p arcade machines and simple, two colour games need look no further than *Arcade Classics* from Firebird Silver, which includes versions of the old favourites, Space Invaders, Asteroids, Snakes and Space Wars.

Space Invaders is practically a pixel for pixel copy of the arcade version, retaining all the features of the original.

Asteroids is also faithfully represented, complete with pseudo vector graphic rocks and spaceship. Your vessel is directed by rotate and thrust commands and to progress from level to level, you must destroy all the rocks and asteroids on each screen.

Snakes is a two-player only game where the aim is to kill your opponent's snake by causing him to collide head-on with the body of your own. The aim is to trap your opponent as many times as possible within an adjustable time limit.

Last but not least is Space Wars, another two-player only game, the aim being to destroy your opponent by blasting him with your front-mounted lasers. Both vessels are constantly under the influence of the gravitational pull of a central sun, the strength of which may be set prior to play.



There's masses and masses of playability contained in Arcade Classics, with each of the four games being a good blast in its own right. Add the four together and throw in a powerful soundtrack, and you come out with one of the best budget releases in ages. The fact that a couple of the games are two player only doesn't detract at all from the sheer fun generated by the whole package. This is one for everyone's collection.



When I first heard that Firebird were going to release an arcade collection, I thought it was a great idea and awaited the outcome with interest. I'm not disappointed. The conversions aren't perfect, but they're still fun to play – and at 50p a throw they're certainly far from disastrous. It's a pity that Snakes and Space Wars are two-player only, but if you can get hold of friend then these are truly Arcade Classics.



PRESENTATION 82%
Great title screen and plenty of options.

GRAPHICS 74%
Fairly basic – but then so were the originals!

SOUND 82%
The soundtrack's superb, although some of the more familiar effects are missing.

HOOKABILITY 93%
Simplicity was (and is) the name of the game.

LASTABILITY 88%
Each game presents a challenge.

OVERALL 90%
Great entertainment.

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FORBIDDEN FOREST
Top Ten, £1.99

This ageing US Gold classic has just been given a new lease of life courtesy of the new Top Ten budget label.

The player takes the role of an heroic archer, entering the realm of the Forbidden Forest to do battle with the evil Demogorgon who reigns supreme. Before this monumental showdown, the Demogorgon's minions have to be despatched – these terrors include giant frogs, snakes, skeletons and spiders.

The graphics are unbelievably blocky, but the gameplay is superb – full of blood, guts and gore. A superb soundtrack belts along as the archer cleaves a path through the forest, adding greatly to the atmosphere. This is definitely a classic – not to be missed.

OVERALL 82%

FRENESIS
Mastertronic, £1.99

One thing that can be said about *Frenesis* is that it's highly original. However, playability doesn't always go hand-in-hand with new ideas – a fact that is well illustrated here.

The idea is to take control of four bars – two horizontal and two vertical – and to guide them over the swarming aliens. Destroying a set number within a limited time allows progress to the next, faster screen. The first couple of levels are quite easy, but survival becomes increasingly difficult as later levels are reached.

The action is very colourful, but the gameplay is confused and ultimately repetitive. A nice idea which didn't quite make it.

OVERALL 43%

THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF ALICE IN VIDEOLAND
Bug Byte, £2.99

Bug Byte certainly have some gall! They've *freeze-framed* the original multi-load disk version of *Alice* to tape, mastered it, and are now selling the result for three quid. This sounds fine, but there is a major drawback which isn't immediately apparent . . .

All runs well until the end of the first level is reached, whereupon the program tries to access the next level from disk. It doesn't realise the program has loaded from cassette, and tries again to access the non-existent disk. After a few seconds, the 64 gives up and resets itself in confusion.

The first level is unbelievably simple – just guide Alice along a very badly drawn horizontally scrolling path, avoiding inept flying creatures until you reach the end. The occasional floating door causes trouble, but otherwise it's plain sailing for our cute heroine. Basically there's about four minutes of this tedious play on offer before the machine turns itself off – which thankfully saves us the bother.

Three pounds? No way José!

OVERALL 3%

TOAD FORCE
Players, £1.99

It has been decided that the most advanced defence system in the universe has to be destroyed, and you, a bio-mechanical fighting toad, has been enlisted for the task.

The defence network is spread across five levels of scrolling landscape, and is heavily guarded by all manner of vile creatures. The jet-packed toad starts on the planet surface and travels downwards, destroying all in his path. Extra supplies are picked up along the way to the central system to keep the toad alive and the jet-pack working.

The game is extremely well presented, with a sub-game to play while the program loads, an attract mode and a great high-score table. The backdrops are simply gorgeous, with superb use of colour, and the sound works extremely well.

Getting to grips with the control is tricky, and consequently games can be short and numerous, but practice reaps its own rewards and mastering *Toad Force* proves to be highly satisfying.

OVERALL 83%

GUN RUNNER
The Power House, £1.99

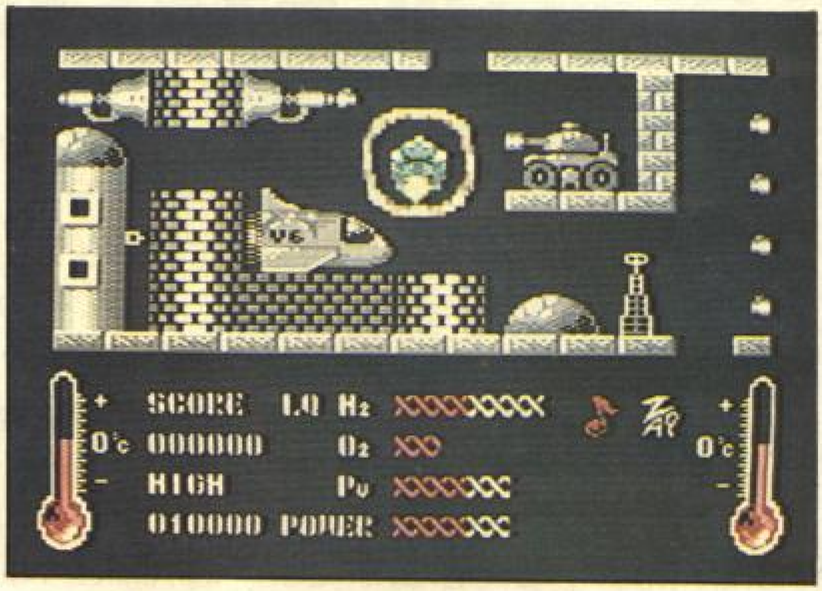
This *Choplifter* variant sees you patrolling a horizontally scrolling landscape in your chopper. Every so often a helpless human appears and is picked up by flying as low as possible and lowering a winch. When the required amount of people have been rescued, the player progresses to the next, more difficult level. Throughout the mission, kamikaze alien craft fly in and try to destroy the helicopter, but the chopper's machine guns and three smart bombs can take them out.

The action is fast and furious, but there's not a lot to keep a player toggling his joystick. The parallax scrolling is extremely pretty, and the graphics and sound are generally good – it's just the gameplay that's lacking.

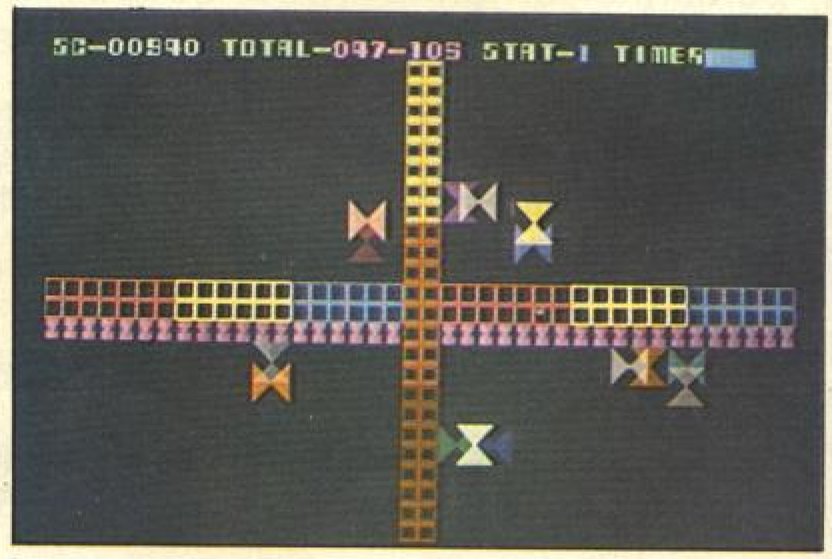
OVERALL 60%



▶ Watching the hideously coloured Forbidden Forest backgrounds can sometimes prove to be the game's toughest challenge



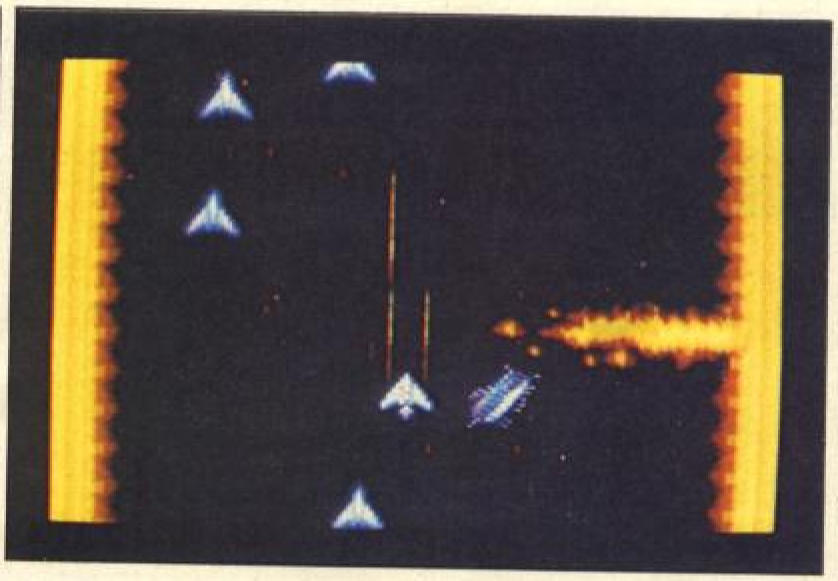
▶ A one-toad fighting force penetrates the defences of the evil planet



▶ Frenesis is original and colourful – but not particularly playable

▶ An inept Gun Runner crashes his chopper





▶ **Running the gauntlet of a fiery tunnel in Lazer Force**



▲ **Starforce Nova's scrolling becomes a blur as the ship accelerates**

JACKLE AND WIDE

Bulldog, £1.99

Poor old Dr Jackle has just gulped a transforming potion made by his enemy Dr Piqued, and become Mr Wide, a bloated fatty who makes Gary Liddon look like Twiggy. Not being terribly happy with this situation, the great fool is now wobbling around in search of an antidote. The cure to his obesity is located in Dr Piqued's secret lab, and the hunt for his place of experimentation forms the plot.

The search is carried out in two parts – a vertically scrolling journey through Hyde Park, and the negotiation of the London Sewers, where the evil Doctor's lab resides.

There are plenty of puzzles and problems to overcome, but the gameplay isn't at all rewarding or addictive. The graphics are very ugly, with flickering sprites and gaudy backdrops, and the action quickly becomes tiresome.

OVERALL 29%

LAZER FORCE

Code Masters, £1.99

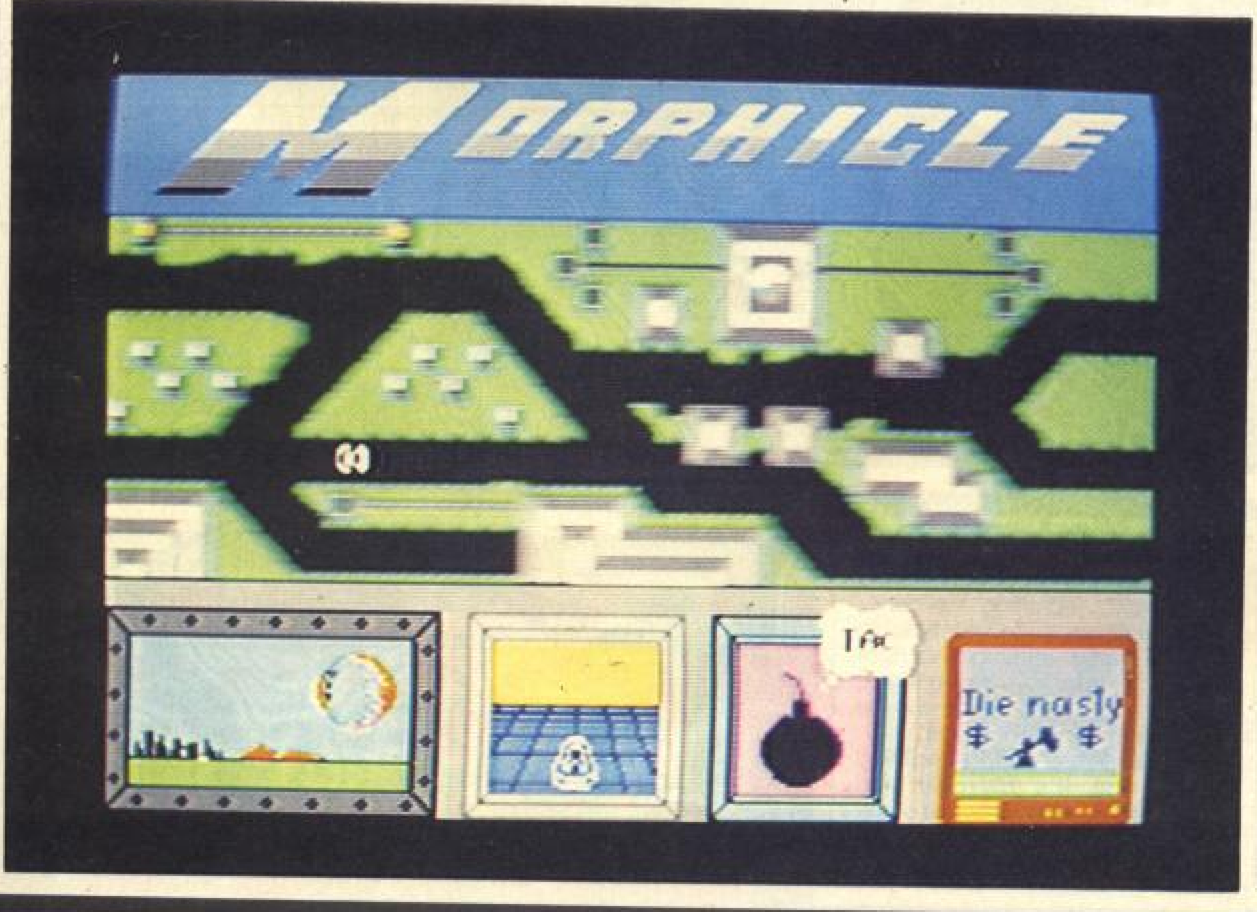
Who on Earth writes the inlays for Code Masters, and how do they get away with it? 'A new arcade shoot 'em up which stretches the 64 to its limits' is the claim made on this one – and colourful it might be, but there's no way the 64 is at all stretched.

There are four highly derivative levels to blast through. The first is a vertically scrolling hazard-filled tunnel, next comes a screen from *Centipede*, then a refuelling stage exactly like the one in *Moon Cresta* and finally there's a journey up a vertically scrolling road, just like that in the ancient Mastertronic game, *BMX Racers*.

Each of the four levels is finished with ease, and the action becomes repetitious very quickly thereafter. There are plenty of better shoot 'em ups around offering far more addiction and variety.

OVERALL 32%

▼ **Is it a plane? Is it a car? – No, it's Morphicle!**



MORPHICLE 'THE TRANSFORMING CAR'

The Power House, £1.99

A bomb is steadily ticking away and you have been volunteered to defuse it. The mission starts in a fabulous transformer car, zooming along over a horizontally scrolling landscape. The road has to be followed carefully, otherwise the car crashes and the mission ends. Occasionally a roadblock is encountered, but a press of the fire button transforms the car into a flying machine, and it zooms over the obstacle with ease.

The next stage involves the negotiation of a tricky maze, and finally a superbly drawn floating slide puzzle is put together before the bomb is finally made safe.

The first two levels are pretty poor, and at times so obscure that they're almost too frustrating to persevere with. However, the final level is superb – it's a shame that more couldn't have been made of it. *Morphicle* is an enjoyable diversion, but not one to put at the top of your shopping list.

OVERALL 58%

STARFORCE NOVA

Mastertronic, £1.99

The survivors of an alien attack on Earth are being evacuated and taken to safety in a giant Space Ark. However, this trip involves travelling through the F Dimension, an uncharted area of space where alien attackers lay in wait.

The player defends the Ark by flying over the long, horizontally scrolling craft shooting down any attackers. After two sweeps letters appear and are shot for a bonus score. After that the action starts again with an even more hostile force to contend with.

The gameplay is loosely based on *Uridium*, and provides some fun as you fly over the craft. A decent soundtrack adds urgency, but in the end the action wears a little thin. There are plenty of other shoot 'em ups to try before this one.

OVERALL 52% ▶

BUDGET TEST

REVENGE OF THE MUTANT CAMELS II

MAD, £2.99 cass, joystick only

After centuries of peace, the people of Earth are once again about to be thrown into battle following the re-emergence of the evil Zzyaxian Empire, which has plans to attack the Terrans' homeworld.

Unused to to the rigours and tactics of warfare, Earth's only hope is to initiate the genetically mutated beasts created by the ancients over 6000 years ago. These animals, specifically the mutant camels, were last used in combat against the Zzyaxian aggressors when they saved the Earth from defeat. The signal for their reactivation has been sent and once more the fate of the Earth lies in their hooves.

Taking direct control of one such creature, your mission takes place on the planet Zzyax, where there are 100 horizontally scrolling attack waves waiting to be confronted.

The camel fires continuously while the joystick button is held



As happens with most of mister Minter's games, I find it harder to relate to a camel than to a spaceship or futuristic vessel of some kind. Having said all that, I'm sure that the 86 billion Minter fans will run out and buy it nonetheless – and they'll enjoy it too, as this is a typical Minter product, full of inspired characters and more than slightly off the wall gameplay. There's not a lot on offer for square system-dwellers though.

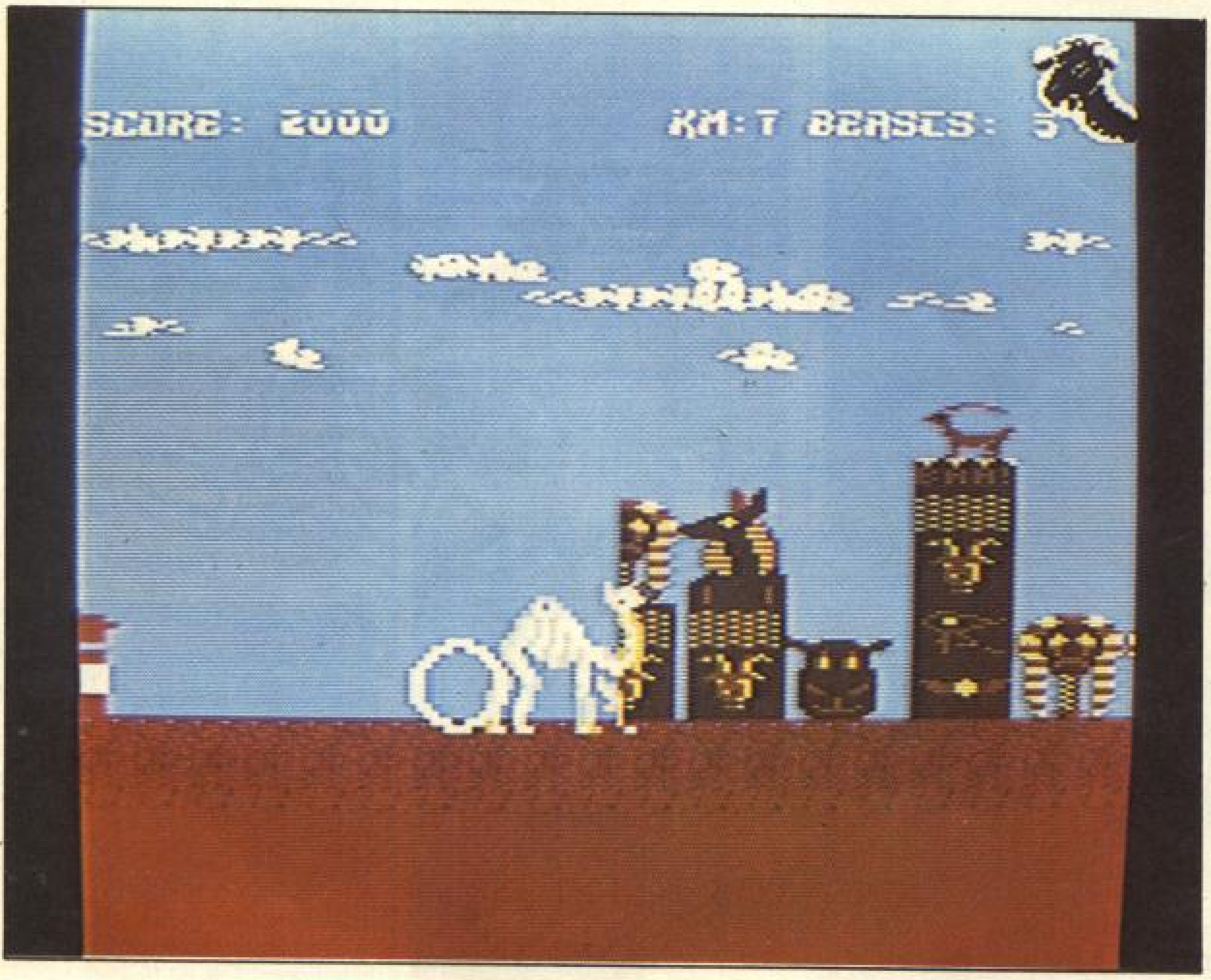


Superb stuff! The third chapter of the Camels series follows on perfectly from its predecessors. The individual graphics are occasionally eye-wrenching, but are always extremely clever, they also contain some great humour. The gameplay echoes Revenge I, but it's much better, with a new 'weapons select' system, more powerful firepower and a much improved control method. The sound is also great, and lends a great atmosphere to the action. Minter has certainly come up with the goods again – and at a price that everyone can afford.

down, and pushing up on the joystick launches the mutant Dromedary into the air where it can then launch bombs onto the Zzyaxians below.

At the end of a wave, new weapons may be 'bought' by accessing the weapons selection mode. Placing the cursor circle over a previously attempted square and pressing the fire button accesses the the equipment list where, depending on the amount of credits earned, different weapons and shields may be purchased.

Initially, five mutant camels are available, and extra beasts may also be purchased later on.



PRESENTATION 80%
Good documentation and pleasant on-screen appearance.

GRAPHICS 80%
Large, colourful and typically Minteresque.

SOUND 79%
A gentle title tune contrasts with the games awesome cacophany.

HOOKABILITY 89%
Although the action is strange – it's easy to get into.

LASTABILITY 79%
100 different waves to negotiate and plenty of blasting action.

OVERALL 90%
Another Minter classic which show's that there's still life in the horizontally shoot 'em up theme.

SWAMP FEVER

Players, £1.99

Somewhere in Florida, nuclear waste has leaked from an underground dump and caused mutant plants to grow. Desperate scientists have now asked you to enter the irradiated swamp and pick the plants so that they can experiment on them.

The plants in question are scattered throughout the horizontally scrolling swamp, which you traverse in an inflatable dingy. Energy draining mutant animals attack throughout, causing you to call up a gun as your only means of defence.

Swamp Fever offers nothing special, but it's playable and entertaining enough for the money.

OVERALL 54%



THE SCORELORD'S HI

ALIENS (Electric Dreams)
126,500 Paul Griffiths, Llandudno, N Wales
52,725 Sean Meadows, North End, Portsmouth
23,950 George Dick, Invergordon, Scotland

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44,450 Colin Box, Doncaster, S Yorks
21,200 Chris McLean, Helsby, Cheshire

BEAMRIDER (Activision)
960,420 Steve Jarratt, ZZAP! Towers
642,704 Michael Sung, Peterlee, Co Durham
272,174 Steve Tye, Kidderminster, Worcs

BMX SIMULATOR (Code Masters)
4,420 Jap, Ettingshall Park, Wolverhampton
4,260 Adrian Broadley, Manby, Lincs
3,755 Stuart Jesson, Stoney Stanton, Leics

BREAKTHRU (US Gold)
246,000 Vincent Old, Wellingborough, Northants
138,050 Paul Gibson, Sunderland, Tyne And Wear
111,900 Gary Rice, Colchester, Essex

BULLDOG (Gremlin Graphics)
2,238,200 Gary Footitt, Droylsden, Manchester
1,825,700 Roger Alexandersson, Goteborg, Sweden
1,207,200 Tony Shoreman, Billington, Lancs

COBRA (Ocean)
285,900 Philip Stevens, Alfreton, Derbyshire
93,400 Patrick Green, Burnley, Lancs
89,200 Stephen Wildridge, Great Sutton, S Wirral

CRYSTAL CASTLES (US Gold)
677,992 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
668,995 Richard Hardbattle, Nuneaton, Warks
652,127 Iain Davidson, Dumfries, Scotland

DECATHLON (Firebird)
10,084 Andrew Holmes, Bottesford, Notts
10,247 Jonathan Richards, Attleborough, Warks
9,840 Howard Worton, Southwark, London

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN (Mirrorsoft)
Completed by:
March 1201 Van Crombrugge Bart, Anterp, Belgium

DELTA (Thalamus)
1,258,430 Colin Redfern, Heywood, Lancs
972,636 Andrew Simmonds, E Studdal, Kent
895,850 Aidon Donnelley, Kilmacud, Dublin

DRAGON'S LAIR (Software Projects)
63,997 Sean Walker (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
36,642 Simon Cole's Mum, Chelmsford, Essex
33,750 Simon Cole, Chelmsford, Essex

DUET (Elite)
168,170 Fu Sang Li, Crewe, Cheshire
159,110 Gary Smith, Basingstoke, Hants
120,370 Paul Dunstan, High Wycombe, Bucks

ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE (Software Projects)
92,742 Craig Knight, Keyworth, Notts
78,538 Howard Clarke, Inverness, Scotland
76,584 Ian Sullivan, Forest Hill, London

EXPRESS RAIDER (US Gold)
68,450 Gavin Shute, Aylesbury, Bucks
42,500 Chris McLean, Helsby, Cheshire

THE EQUALISER (The Power House)
20,620 Dean Stinton, Botley, Southampton
14,850 Jonathan Richards, Attleborough, Warks
13,120 Graeme Crichton, Irvine, Ayrshire

FEUD (Bulldog)
87% David Barker, Bedfont, Middx
44% Paul Dunstan, High Wycombe, Bucks
44% Richard Morgan, Fordingbridge, Hampshire

FIRELORD (Hewson)
145,205 Richard Pargeter, Coventry, W Mids
143,160 Daniel Osbourne, Hornsea, N Humbs
116,805 Damian Ward, Harrogate, W Yorks

FIRETRACK (Electric Dreams)
835,640 Darren Cole, Chingford, London
664,960 Kristian Bruun, Copenhagen, Denmark
527,290 Johnny Larsen, Copenhagen, Denmark

FIST II (Melbourne House)
1,753,000 Steven Rolf, Kettering, Northants
1,560,800 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
1,220,000 Steven Guilfoyle, Oldham

GALIVAN (Imagine)
287,000 Chris McLean, Helsby, Cheshire

GAUNTLET: DEEPER DUNGEONS (US Gold)
Merlin The Wizard
8,787,195 Asher Rashid, Thornaby, Cleveland
4,350,297 Paul Cashley, Bishopston, Bristol
4,308,061 Michael Robertson, Stirlingshire, Scotland

Thor The Warrior
4,678,932 David Taylor, Alvington, Glos
3,974,521 Paul Cashley, Bishopston, Bristol
2,999,320 Richard Hardbattle, Nuneaton, Warks

Questor the Elf
2,497,341 Paul Cashley, Bishopston, Bristol

Thyra the Valkyrie
818,692 Paul Hollington, Hullbridge, Essex

GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS (Elite)
920,800 Casey Gallacher, Swallowfield, Reading
531,890 Christian Major, Norwich, Norfolk
456,060 Chris Goodswen, Norwich, Norfolk

GUNSHIP (Microprose)
278,785 Richard Mellor, Bridgwater, Somerset
265,990 David Nicol, Heworth, York
262,960 Mark Logan, Inverness, Scotland

HEAD OVER HEELS (Ocean)
95,980 Ciaran Brennan, ZZAP! Towers
88,140 Richard Lunn, Leeds, W Yorks
86,860 A Watson, Stockton, Cleveland

HERCULES (Alpha/Omega)
1,159,880 Thomas Broers, Lundflata, Norway
815,920 Nils-Olav Barvag, 6770 Nordfjordeid, Norway
755,500 Robert Hemphill, Port Glasgow

HERO (Firebird)
177,762 Patrick Lammers, 1400 Nivelles, Belgium
125,324 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
52,093 Paul Cochrane, Dundee, Scotland

I, BALL (Firebird)
47,760 Marc Spence, Leeds 10
32,090 Matthew Viveash, Chinnor, Oxon
21,300 Stuart Scattergood, Address not included

INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST (Pandora)
2,186,800 Guy Gilding, Slough, Berks
1,143,300 M Booman, Oud-Beijerland, The Netherlands
1,049,800 Frank the Menhir, Herts

IRIDIS ALPHA (Llamasoft)
599,760 George Bray, Armthorpe, Doncaster
349,520 Colin Redfern, Heywood, Lancs
204,390 Jonathan Wood, Edgeware, Middx

JAILBREAK (Konami)
195,500 Paul Gibson, Sunderland, Tyne And Wear
102,500 Malcolm Redfern, Preston, Lancs
89,500 Stephen Lund, Bradford, W Yorks

JEEP COMMAND (Bug Byte)
303,990 J Gheorghisor (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
250,350 Dave Breed, Cullercoats, Tyne & Wear
227,380 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks

KNUCKLEBUSTERS (Melbourne House)
11,700 Craig Bent, Failsworth, Manchester
6,300 Steve Quinnell, New Eltham, London
5,700 Bharat Vaghela, Rugby, Warks

KRAKOUT (Gremlin Graphics)
21,184,770 Michael Eikmans, The Netherlands
12,740,800 Dave & Brett Warburton, Cheshire
3,068,500 Steven Packer, Chelmsford, Essex

LEADER BOARD (US Gold/Access)
NOVICE
-39 Robert Smith, Edgbaston, Birmingham
-28 Paul Ratje, Newport, Isle of wight
-26 Gary Fuller, Hethersett, Norfolk

AMATEUR
-27 Jonathon Webb, Highbridge, Somerset
-25 Robert Troughton, Keighley, W Yorks
-23 Paul Allan, Aberdeen

PROFESSIONAL
-33 Philip Astley, Kingswinford, W Mids
-24 Paul Allan, Aberdeen
-22 Robin Evans, Tring, Herts

LEADERBOARD: EXECUTIVE EDITION (US Gold/Access)
NOVICE
-25 David Dunn, Shaftesbury, Dorset
-23 Anthony Scotthorne, Worksop, Notts
-21 Gary Smith, Basingstoke, Hants

AMATEUR
-19 G Sinclair, Cornwall

PROFESSIONAL
-30 Steve Jones, North End, Portsmouth
-18 Stewart Rogers, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

LIGHTFORCE (FTL)
3,239,250 Richard Burgman, Seaford, Essex
2,526,975 Jake E, West Bromwich, W Mids
2,296,360 Taki Liberopoulos, Athens, Greece

MARIO BROTHERS (Ocean)
449,380 Jake E, West Bromwich, W Mids
252,620 Ozz, New Eltham, London

METROCROSS (US Gold)
311,700 Louis Farnham, Twickenham, Middlesex
168,950 Gary Smith, Basingstoke, Hants
90,000 David Bond, Swindon, Wilts

MILK RACE (Mastertronic)
7,965 Kristian Fulfitt, Estover, Plymouth
7,906 Vincent Old, Wellingborough, Northants
7,794 Gary Smith, Basingstoke, Hants

MONTEZUMA'S REVENGE (Databyte)
1,127,500 W Drew, Brisbanem, Australia
412,450 Adam Trewella, Stapleton, Bristol
398,450 Ozz, New Eltham, London

MUTANTS (Ocean)
66,209,750 Steven Packer, Chelmsford, Essex
51,644,500 Adie Bonner, Southbourne
31,025,750 Gareth Williams, Swansea, W Glamorgan

NEMESIS THE WARLOCK (Martech)
37,460 Anthony Scotthorne, Worksop, Notts
14,290 Andrew Scully, Brincliffe, Sheffield
12,770 Mike Thomas, Caerphilly, Mid Glam

NINJA MASTER (Mastertronic)
485,840 Gordon Shearer, Rothes, Morayshire
198,880 Robert Futter, Downham Market, Norfolk



GH SCORING HEROES

196,315 Michael Pihl, Kumla, Sweden

NOMAD (Ocean)
5,264 John Gheorghisor, (Runsoft), Australia
4,065 Paul Want, Harrogate, N Yorks
3,885 Paul Tudor, Stourbridge, Pedmore

OLLI AND LISSA (Firebird)
19,820 Lee Barker, Northwich, Cheshire
14,898 Stuart Scattergood, Address not included
13,715 Henderik Engelsman, Maassluis, Holland

PANTHER (Mastertronic)
250,900 Liam Chivers, Battenhall, Worcs
215,500 Jason Birnie, Cranleigh, Surrey
200,940 Steve Lee, Guildford, Surrey

PAPERBOY (Elite)
301,400 Mark Rolf, Kettering, Northants
300,700 John White, Whitefield, Manchester
140,700 Steve Quinnell, New Eltham, London

PARADROID PLUS (Hewson)
86,500 Brian Yeo, Tarbolton, Ayrshire
63,200 Adam Beabies, Tarbolton, Ayrshire
45,500 Karim Bouali, Tooting, London

PARALLAX (Ocean)
106,850 Ali Kerswell, Guildford, Surrey
89,300 Jason Birnie, Cranleigh, Surrey
78,400 Adam Pracy, Newton Flotman, Norwich

PARK PATROL (Firebird)
995,610 Jonathan Edge, Waverton, Cheshire
994,990 Simon Jones, Chelmsford, Essex
993,130 Paul Harwood, Penge, London

POD (Mastertronic)
1,468,440 Karsten Toksvig, 8832 SKAIS, Denmark
1,082,440 Matthew Penn, Ormskirk, Lancashire
1,046,800 Dean James, West Bromwich, W Mids

QUARTET (Activision)
2,874,500 Adie griffiths, Crowborough, E sussex
295,385 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
186,400 Steven Packer, Chelmsford, Essex

RANARAMA (Hewson)
3,358,400 Richard Leadbetter, Witham, Essex
1,822,200 Craig Knight, Keyworth, Notts
1,555,700 Martin Draper, Alfreton, Derby

RE-BOUNDER (Gremlin Graphics)
1,276,337 Cleveland Gibbon, Erdington, W Mids
1,235,130 Nik Kimberley, Wolverhampton, W Mids

RIVER RAID (Firebird)
259,235 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
131,020 Jonathan Richards, Attleborough, Warks

ROAD RUNNER (US Gold)
285,000 Andrew Dallyn, Braunton, Devon
282,860 Paul Dunstan, High Wycombe, Bucks
272,320 Roger Alexandersson, Goteborg, Sweden

ROCK 'N' WRESTLE (Melbourne House)
3,125,100 Jamie Orridge, Gedling, Nottingham
2,655,200 Alan Smith, Glenrothers, Fife
941,300 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrone, Aberdeen

SABOTEUR (Durell)
£2,789,600 Gareth Mitchell, Mirfield, W Yorks
£1,175,000 Daniel Maurice, Redland, Bristol
£971,300 Jari Jaakola, Inkeroinen, Finland

SANXION (Thalamus)
1,006,466 Steven Malpass, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs
784,390 Stephen Gandy, Halesowen, W Mids
517,860 Peter Williams, Preston, Lancs

SCOOBY DOO (Elite)
248,600 Sean McDonagh, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear
194,550 Gareth Mackie, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire
153,600 Stuart Kelly, Reading, Berks

SHAO-LIN'S ROAD (The Edge)
128,420 Damian Boocock, Colne, Lancs
36,164 Steven Young, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear
31,430 Howard Worton, Southwark, London

SHOCKWAY RIDER (FTL)
1,524,798 Matthew Phypers, Sunnyhill, Derby
291,000 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
88,350 Howard Worton, Southwark, London

SILENT SERVICE (US Gold/Microprose)
(TONS SUNK)
1,032,800 Guy Gilding, Slough, Berks
910,100 Karsten Tokisuig, Drosselvej 6, Denmark
563,100 Steven Hall, Croughton, N Hants

SKATE ROCK (Bubble Bus)
288,430 Justin Cole, Huddersfield, W Yorks
239,020 Sean Walker, (Runsoft), Australia
223,280 Stephen Bloor, Nuneaton, Warks

SKY RUNNER (Cascade)
$669,700 John Doyle, Kilmarnoch, Ayrshire
$190,600 Martin Dobson, London E12
$125,500 Peter Hulme, Bishop's Stortford, Herts

SKOOL DAZE (Micromega)
126,910 Anthony Duiker (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
120,780 Gordon Shearer, Rothes, Morayshire
104,340 Scott Moore, Fixby, Huddersfield

SLAMBALL (Americana)
7,462,660 Carleton Shaw, London, N10
5,801,720 C Harbinson, Rumney, Cardiff
5,504,870 Gavin Burnett, Westhill, Inverness

SLAP FIGHT (Imagine)
586,000 Matthew Viveash, Chinnor, Oxon
147,775 David Scouller, Billingham, Cleveland
137,560 Cleveland Gibbon, Erdington, W Mids

SPLIT PERSONALITIES (Domark)
680,400 Mrs L Hayden, London E16
665,200 Mrs J Carroll, Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset
505,100 Michael Skelcher, Wentoning, Beds

STARQUAKE (Bubble Bus)
287,763 Nigel Froud, Godalming, Surrey
287,140 Ove Knudseu, 5033 Fyllingsdaleu, Norway
273,667 Per Kjellander, Stenungsund, Sweden

STREET SURFER (Bubble Bus)
21,108 Jonathan Stock, Denton, Northampton
16,270 Howard Clarke, Inverness, Scotland
15,811 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E Sussex

SUPER CYCLE (US Gold/Epyx)
342,650 Bryan Chamberlain, Norwich, Norfolk
328,860 Leigh O'Connell, Murrumbeena, Australia
320,160 A Verhaegie, Bletchley, Bucks

TENTH FRAME (US Gold/Access)
AMATEUR
300 Stefan Alexandersson, Goteborg, Sweden
279 R Geens, B8470 De Panne, The Netherlands
278 Michael Eley, Wimbourne, Dorset

PROFESSIONAL
300 Stefan Alexandersson, Goteborg, Sweden
233 Neil Taylor, Bracknell, Berks
214 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrone, Aberdeen

TERRA CRESTA (Imagine)
402,100 Michael Dunajew, Adelaide, Australia
371,800 Robert Hemphill, Port Glasgow, Renfrewshire
341,000 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks

THING BOUNCES BACK (Gremlin Graphics)
1,649,973 Mick Kinsman, New Malden, Surrey
1,338,108 Steve Bennett, Prestatyn, Clwyd
1,134,940 Iain Davidson, Dumfries, Scotland

THRUST (Firebird)
4,764,950 Robert Troughton, Keighley, W Yorks
4,182,050 Arlo Swinson, Doncaster, S Yorks
3,500,800 Declan Quinn, Bessbrook, Newry Co Down

THUNDERBOLT (Code Masters)
213,220 Robert Troughton, Keighley, W Yorks
164,450 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E sussex

TOY BIZARRE (Activision)
223,420 J D Oliver, Ipswich, Suffolk
144,700 Sherif Salama, Cairo, Egypt
102,900 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers

TRAILBLAZER (Gremlin Graphics)
1,123,350 Jason Cooper, Wednesbury, W Mids
1,120,040 Henry Rawlinson, Salisbury, Wilts
828,270 Ian Robinson, Tottenham, London

TRAP (Alligata)
481,900 Lawry Simm, Liverpool L23
429,510 Colin Bayne, Glenrothes, Fife
328,500 Robert Elliot, Middlesborough, Cleveland

UCHI MATA (Martech)
378,760 Mark Sexton, Lancing, W Sussex
353,795 Nicholas Lester, Dudley, W Mids
326,655 D Simmons, Wythenshawe, Manchester

URIDIUM PLUS (Hewson)
244,505 Michael Lykke, Viborg, Denmark
197,925 Russell Wallace, Co Dublin, Ireland
175,405 Paul Wheatley, S Norwood, London

VIDEO MEANIES (Mastertronic)
117,496 Stuart Jesson, Stoney Stanton, Leics
116,758 Dean James, West Bromwich, W Mids
113,524 Sanjay Vaghela, Rugby, Warks

VOIDRUNNER (Mastertronic)
5,403,560 Mick Wall, Hillsborough, Sheffield
4,903,840 Adam Loxton, Street, Somerset
3,800,564 Steven Young, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear

WARHAWK (Firebird)
6,229,526 Glenn Haworth, Swallow, Lincs
4,459,784 Hamish Patel, Northolt, Middlesex
3,322,648 Jamie Orridge, Gedling, Nottingham

WEST BANK (Gremlin Graphics)
210,000 Jon Cullen, Hillgate, Stockport
141,250 Mark Huck, Washington, Tyne & Wear
131,600 James Lavelle, Copmanthorpe, York

WIZARD'S LAIR (Bubble Bus)
154,140 Craig Wills, Taunton, Somerset
152,735 Steven Medcraft, Rayleigh, Essex
133,085 Nik Yarker, Blaby, Leicester

WONDER BOY (Activision)
353,160 Jason Langmead, Vale, Guernsey
347,410 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E Sussex
168,170 Gary Blackledge, Crowborough, E Sussex

XEVIOUS (US Gold)
824,380 Fintan Brady, Virginia, Ireland
281,280 Jonathon Webb, Highbridge, Somerset
224,100 Steven Parkes, Newcastle, Australia

YIE AR KUNG-FU (Imagine)
1,307,000 Gavin Conway, Paisley, Scotland
394,700 M Brown & M Grange, Borrowash, Derby
355,300 Andrew Crowther, Kibworth, Leicester

YIE AR KUNG-FU II (Imagine)
288,300 Carl Adams, Tooting, London
183,300 Ian Coulter, Leeds
166,100 Steven Bramley, Bromley, Kent

Z (Rhino)
701,250 Howard Clarke, Inverness, Scotland
671,450 Jake E, West Bromwich, W Mids
576,200 Stephen Ross, Ryde, Isle of Wight

ZOLYX (Firebird)
261,608 Nick Aulton, Solihull, W Mids
256,929 Anthony Scotthorne, Worksop, Notts
210,011 Jason Chyppendale, Hall Green, W Mids

ZONE RANGER (Firebird)
18,720 Marc Spence, Leeds 10
14,650 Jonathan Wood, Edgeware, Middx
12,904 Mrs Sue McGovern, Leighton Buzzard, Beds

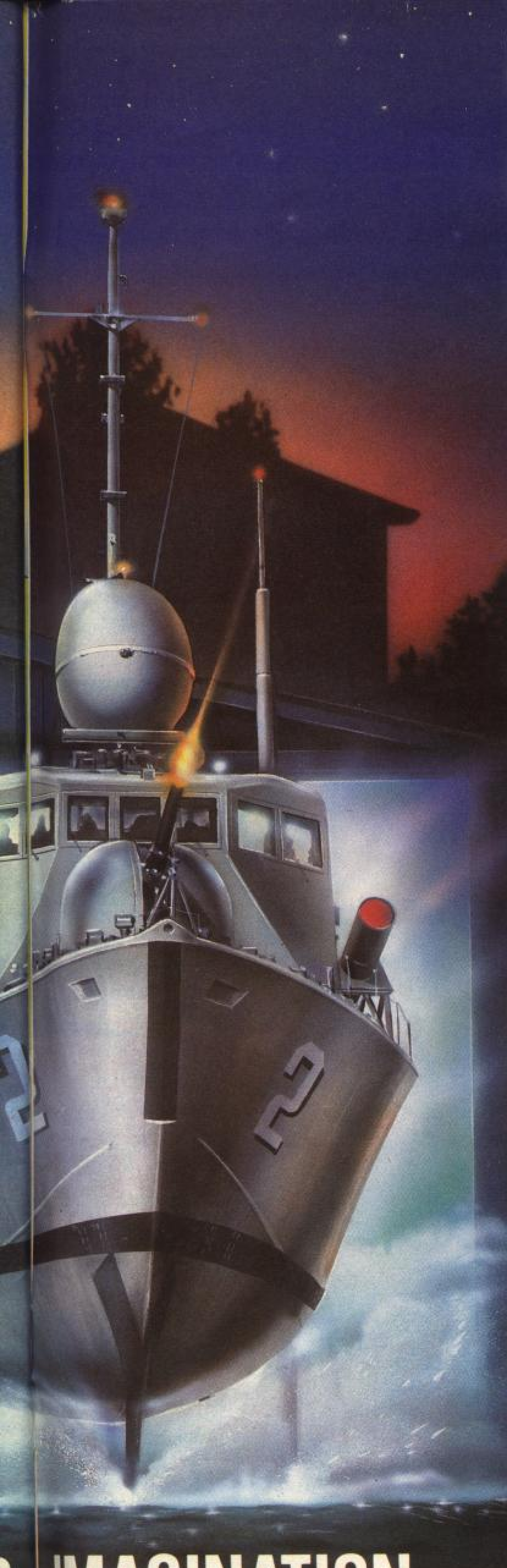


Applications to the Scorelord should be made on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope, and entries which contain more than three high-scores will not be accepted.



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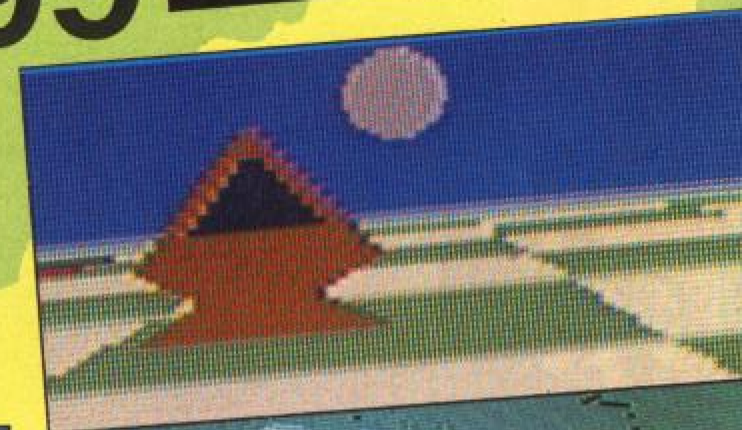
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WHAT THE PAPERS SAID . . .

BALLBLAZER
'Assuredly the best.'
ZZAP! GOLD MEDAL 98%
1986

KORONIS RIFT
'Absolutely superb – definitely one of the all-time classics.'
ZZAP! SIZZLER OVERALL 96%
November 1986

THE EIDOLON
'There's no criticism I can think of for this game.'
ZZAP! GOLD MEDAL OVERALL 97%
November 1986

RESCUE ON FRACTALUS
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ZZAP! SIZZLER OVERALL 91%
September 1985

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ZZAP! READERS'



GAMES TOP 30

1 *(1)* **WORLD GAMES** *(13%)*
US Gold/Epyx

2 *(2)* **LEADERBOARD** *(8%)*
US Gold/Access

3 *(3)* **GAUNTLET** *(7%)*
US Gold

4 *(29)* **THE LAST NINJA** *(6%)*
System 3

5 *(9)* **WIZBALL** *(5%)*
Ocean

6 *(5)* **URIDIUM** *(4%)*
Hewson

7 *(4)* **DELTA** *(4%)*
Thalamus

8 *(13)* **ELITE** *(3%)*
Firebird

9 *(7)* **SANXION** *(3%)*
Thalamus

10 *(8)* **GUNSHIP** *(2%)*
Microprose

11 *(-)* **HEAD OVER HEELS**
Ocean

12 *(17)* **GREEN BERET**
Imagine

13 *(10)* **NEMESIS**
Konami

14 *(-)* **EXECUTIVE LEADERBOARD**
US Gold/Access

15 *(16)* **GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS**
Elite

16 *(19)* **ALIENS**
Electric Dreams

17 *(12)* **BARBARIAN**
Palace

18 *(-)* **DEFENDER OF THE CROWN**
Mirrorsoft

19 *(6)* **THE SENTINEL**
Firebird

20 *(-)* **INFILTRATOR**
US Gold

21 *(-)* **PARADROID**
Hewson

22 *(11)* **INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST**
Pandora

23 *(28)* **ARKANOID**
Imagine

24 *(14)* **I,BALL**
Firebird

25 *(-)* **WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD**
US Gold/Access

26 *(22)* **SUMMER GAMES II**
US Gold/Epyx

27 *(15)* **PARK PATROL**
Firebird

28 *(21)* **PAPERBOY**
Elite

29 *(20)* **SUPER CYCLE**
US Gold/Epyx

30 *(18)* **SACRED ARMOUR OF ANTIRIAD**
Palace

S' CHARTS OCTOBER 1987



MUSIC TOP 10

1 *(1)* **SANXION** *(36%)*
Thalamus
Loading Music – Rob Hubbard

2 *(2)* **DELTA** *(10%)*
Thalamus
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

3 *(3)* **GREEN BERET** *(8%)*
Imagine
Loading Music – Martin Galway

4 *(-)* **THE LAST NINJA** *(5%)*
System 3
Title Tune – Ben Daglish

5 *(-)* **WIZBALL** *(4%)*
Ocean
Main Theme – Martin Galway

6 *(9)* **GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS**
Elite
Main Theme – Mark Cooksey

7 *(4)* **FLASH GORDON**
MAD
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

8 *(8)* **THRUST**
Firebird
Firebird – Rob Hubbard

9 *(-)* **RAMBO**
Ocean
Main Theme – Martin Galway

10 *(10)* **ARKANOID**
Imagine
Title Tune – Martin Galway



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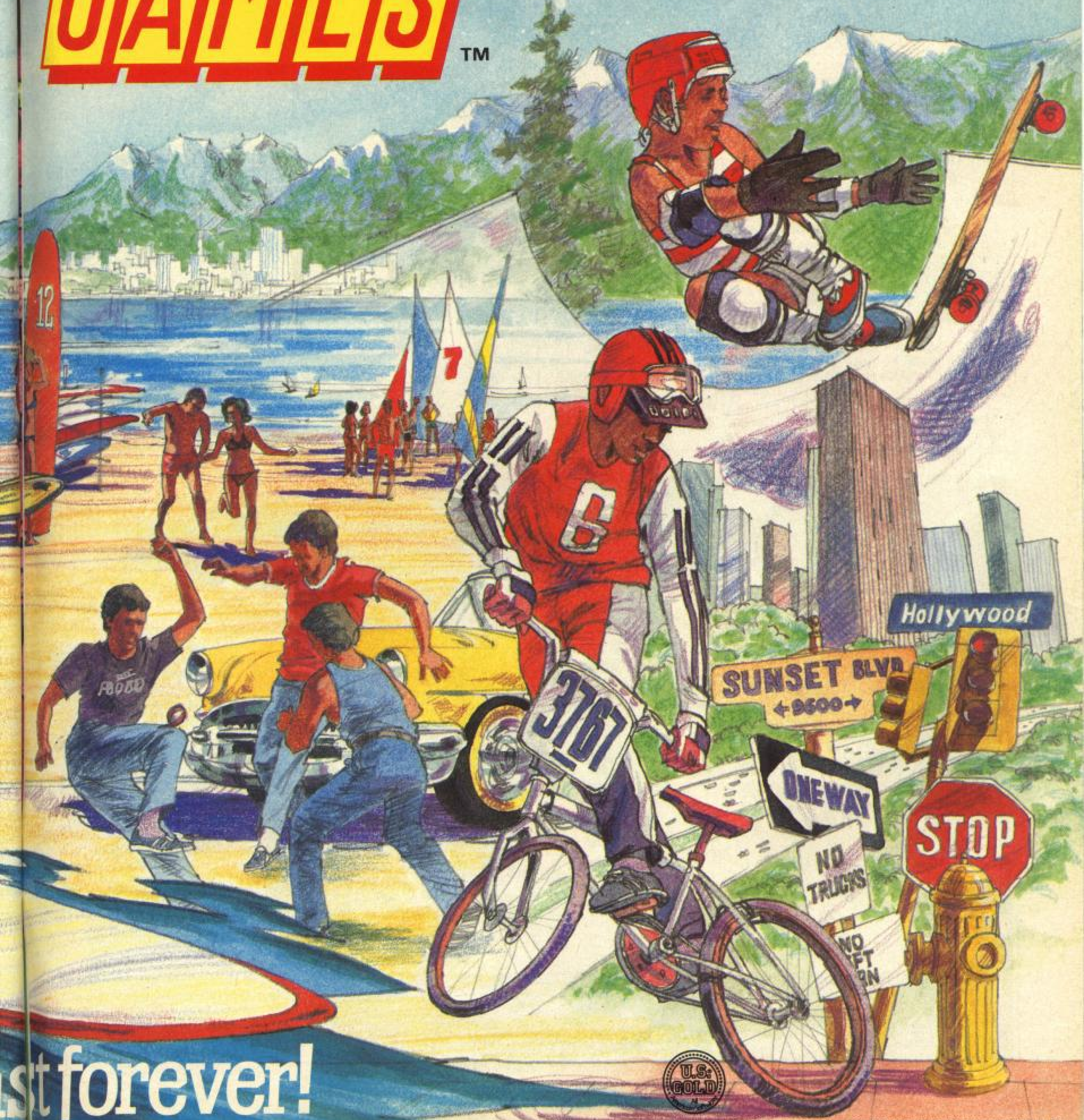
California Games™ features superb graphics, all the atmosphere of the West Coast, and one to eight players can take part. All the quality you expect from an Epyx product is here and so much more. We could tell you more but instead lets hear what ***ZZAP 64*** had to say:

''California Games is quite simply the apex of computer sports gaming''.

''Even in purely technical terms Epyx have somehow managed to surpass their own high standards — the pictures and sounds generated by this program are atmospheric beyond belief.

''If you gather up all the superlatives from previous Epyx reviews and add them together, you just might go halfway towards describing California Games''.

There. Need we say more?



...st forever!

U.S. GOLD

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COMING SOON TO A MONITOR NEAR YOU



All of you – sit up and listen! Here comes a piece of software that has the potential to become one of the most important releases ever to appear on the Commodore 64! The *Shoot 'em up Construction Kit* from Sensible Software, creators of *Parallax* and *Wizball*, is a utility which allows a user with absolutely no knowledge of BASIC or machine code to create his very own stationary or vertically scrolling blasting games.

This type of program is nothing new, with Activision's *Game Maker* being a forerunner. However, its limitations became very obvious to any budding games designer, and the finished results were often dictated by the constraints of the program.

The *Shoot 'em up Construction Kit* on the other hand, is an extremely powerful and very flexible, user-friendly utility which allows a game to be designed, put together and saved independently of the designer program. A saved game can therefore be given to friends and played without ever having to use the main module again.

Designing a game starts with the main menu. From here the user selects one of nine edit modes, tests a game or uses the storage feature. The nine basic options are: edit sprites, background, objects, sound effects, player limitations, attack waves, levels, character set and front end. Choosing one of these results in a further sub-menu appearing, which gives more choices for the feature in operation.

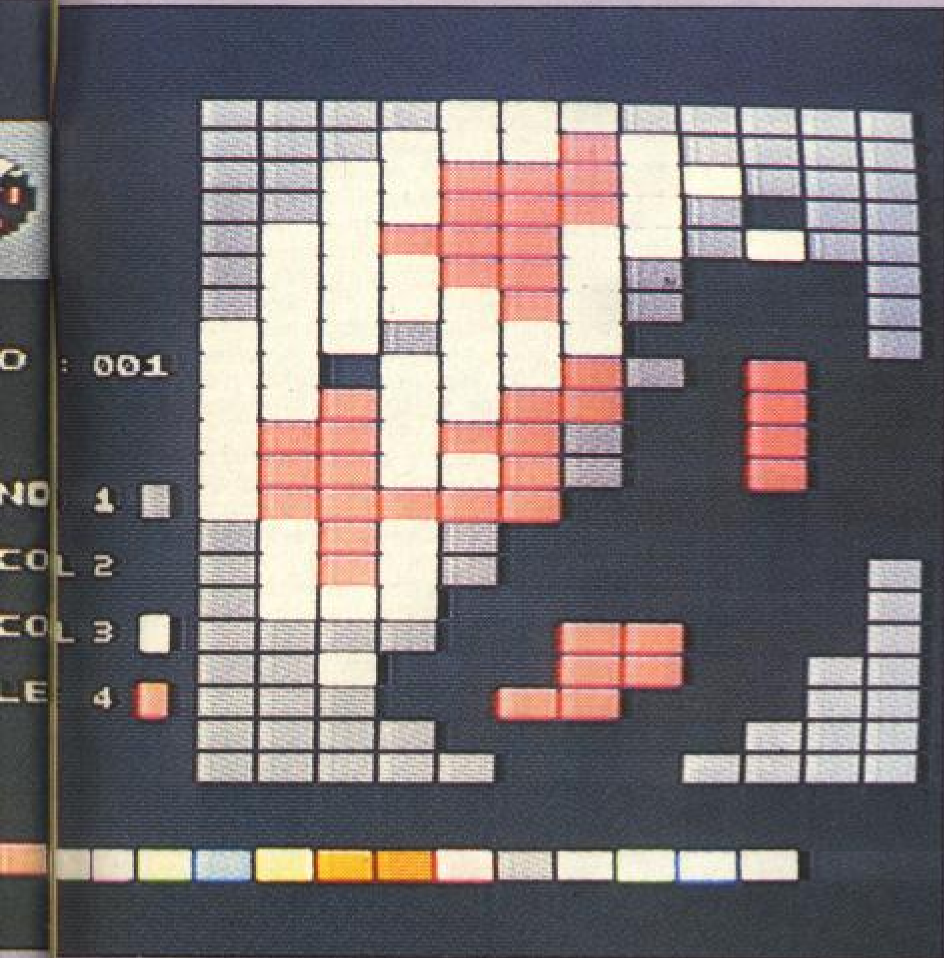


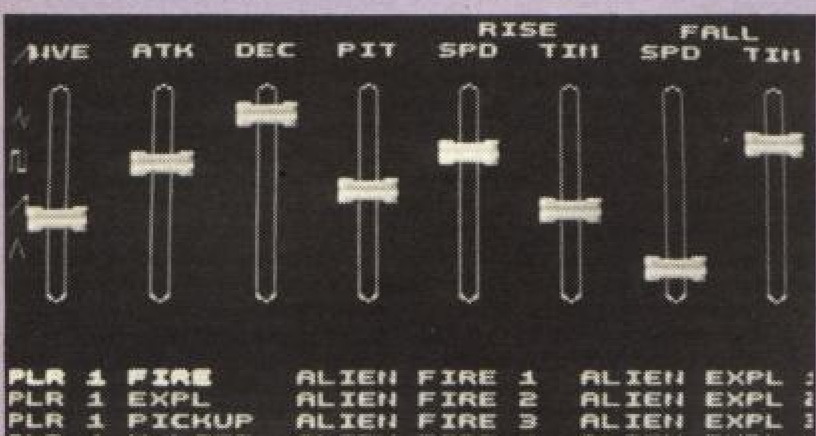
For example, when the 'Edit Sprite' option is chosen, the screen prompts: select, edit, edit colour, slide, mirror, copy and erase. This comprehensive series of options allow up to 128 12X21 sprites to be designed, coloured, animated and bolted together.

Backgrounds are designed in similar fashion, with an extensive sub-menu allowing a char(acter) to be selected, edited and coloured, and all chars to be put into blocks and used to create a scrolling map. The end results are limited only by the user's imagination with cityscapes, a hostile and barren planet, green pastures and metallic spaceships being a fraction of the possibilities – now the Universe isn't the limit!

One of the best features is the 'Edit Sound Effects' option. This noise generator is akin to a miniature 'mixing deck', and allows up to twenty four different sound effects to be generated by changing the on-screen slide controls. The wave, attack, pitch and speed and time of the rise and fall can be altered to create an incredibly wide variety of sounds – ranging from a soft gong to the most jarring and raucous white noise effects.

Other edit options allow the user to define how much space the player has to move in, set the style, frequency and hostility of attack waves and designate the difficulty level. Another incredibly useful feature lets the user select whether multiples or



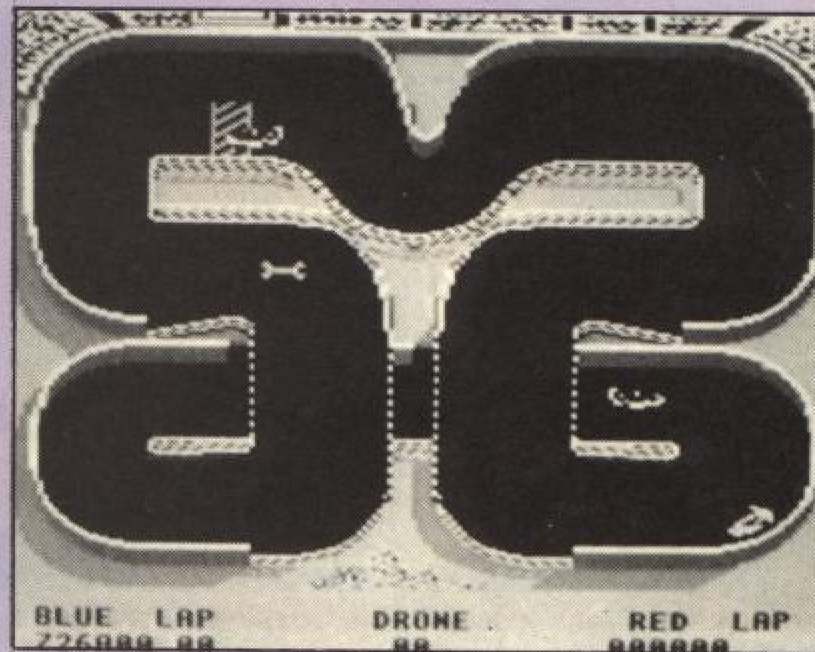


extra weapons feature in the gameplay, and their function in the gameplay is tailored to suit requirements. When the game and graphics have been set, the 'front end' including character set, title screen and logo are designed to add the finishing touches.

To show some of its capabilities, the package comes with four demo games: the cheekily named *Slap 'n' Tickle*, *Outlaw*, a *Gunsmoke* clone, *Transputer Man*, a *Robotron* game and one more, which hasn't yet been christened.

The *Shoot 'em up Construction Kit* is on display at the PCW on Palace's stand, and is released later in September on the new Outlaw label, priced £14.99 on cassette and £19.99 for the disk version.





ACTIVISION HOME COMPUTER SOFTWARE

Electric Dreams

Electric Dream's latest arcade conversion is Atari's one or two player arcade race game, *Super Sprint*.

The entire track is viewed from above, with four tiny racers participating. A race is played over four laps, and the rule is simple: 'winner stays on'. Throughout the race, random hazards appear including oil slicks, tornadoes (the windy type) and traffic cones, all of which must be avoided to save time.

Spanners also appear on the road and are picked up when run over. Once three have been collected, the player is given the opportunity to add an extra feature to his car: extra traction, turbo speed or faster acceleration. There are five levels of each feature, and a car with all fifteen is one mean street machine.

It certainly looks like the conversion could be a faithful repr-

Super Sprint is on display on Electric Dreams' stand at the PCW show and is due out at the end of September, for £9.99 on cassette and £14.99 on disk.

Later in the year Activision promise a *Championship Sprint* version which contains different tracks and a track designer. Sounds good!

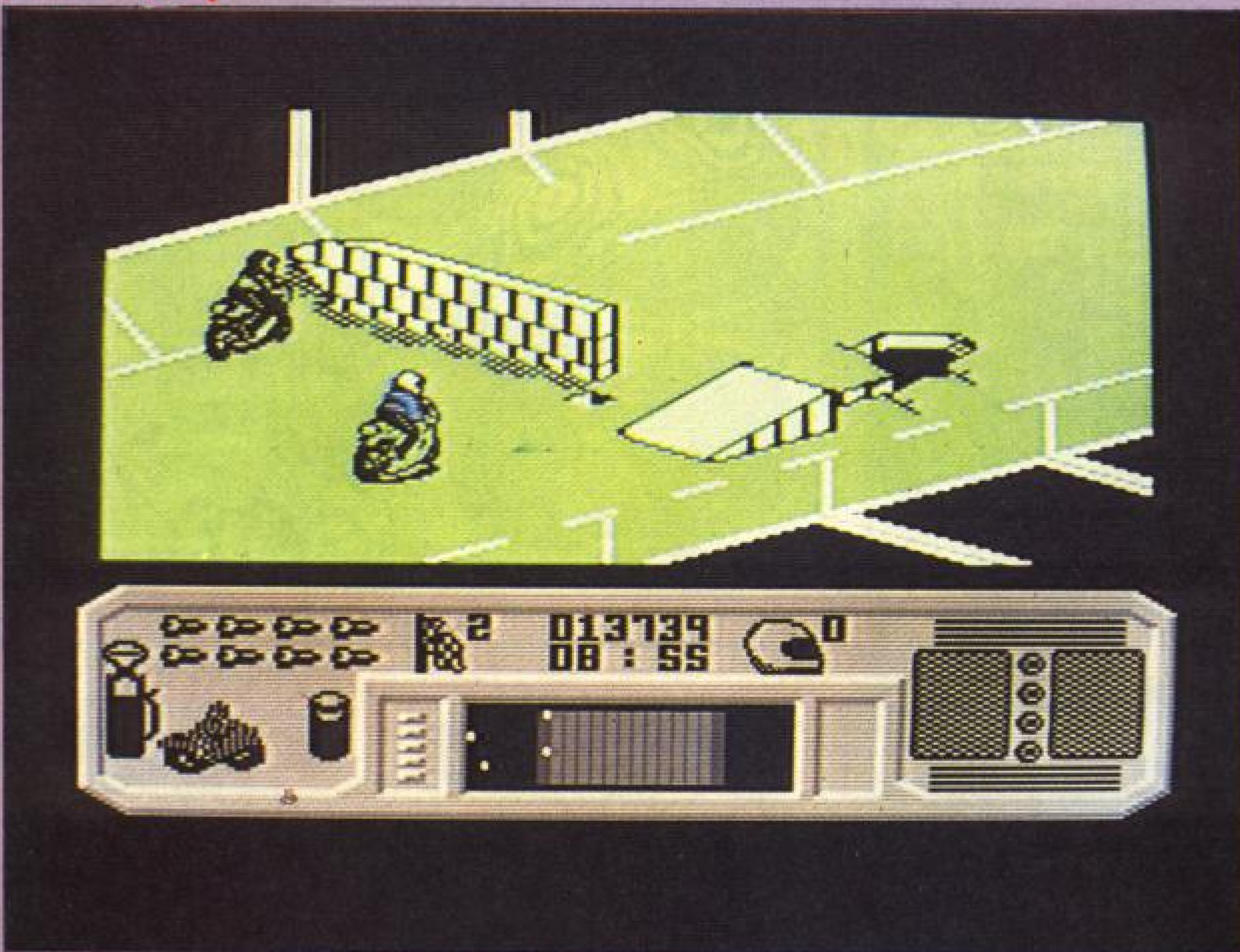
A September release date is also set for Activision's latest high-tech arcade game, *X-15 Alpha Mission*. As the pilot of the fastest plane in the world it is your task to fly the X-15 to the outer reaches of the atmosphere, seek out a terrorist-held space station and 'terminate with extreme prejudice'!

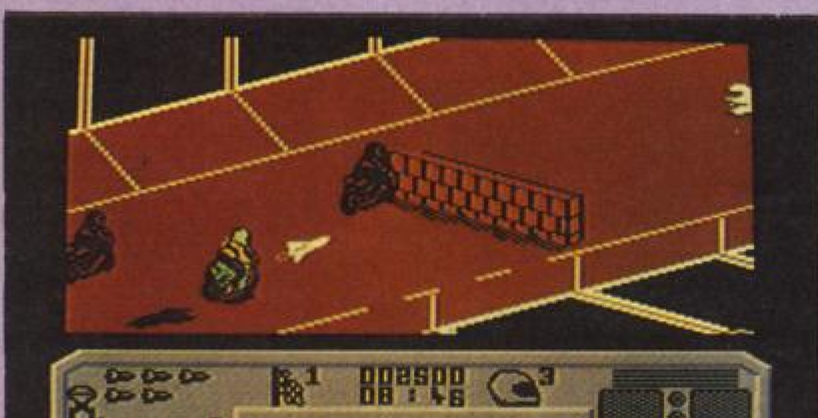
Originally published by the American company Absolute Entertainment, *X-15* features 'an arcade style flight mission utilising state of the art 3D graphics'. Just for the record, it has been written by John Van Ryzin, whose earlier work includes the classic *HERO*.

X-15 Alpha Mission will cost £9.99 on cassette and £14.99 on disk, so start saving!

esentation, as it features eight different tracks and all the speed turns, jump ramps, poles, doors, bridges and tunnels of the original.







▶ With a full complement of weapons, and plenty of fuel, our crash-helmeted hero is all set to take on the challenge for the Mean Streak bike

▶ Road-wars, 24th Century style, with Mean Streak

MIRROR Soft

After stunning us all with their Mediaeval cinematic adventure, *Defender of the Crown*, Mirrorsoft have decided to take us on a trip to the far-flung future, where their latest release, *Mean Streak* (pictured top and centre) is set.

The exact location is a dangerous and barbaric London of the 23rd Century. Society has become so introverted and self-oriented that to all intents and purposes, life outside their technologically enclosed world does not exist. People are transported by molecular assembly/disassembly systems, and the roads that have for so long acted as the arteries and veins of the country are now empty, and left to the mercy of the elements.

As in every society, there is always a rebellious sector – those people who cannot or will not conform to the status quo. The breed of renegade born from the safe and self-centred society of this day and age takes its pleasures from the thrill and excitement of riding high-powered motorbikes along the Battletrack – their name for the long-disused London orbital ring-road, the M25.

To add even more incentive to their efforts, there is a prize on offer to the biker who can claim the Battletrack for his own – the *Mean Streak* – an absolutely incredible custom motorbike whose power is unequalled throughout the world. An ultimate prize for the winner of the ultimate challenge.

The player takes the role of one of the bikers, and dodges and blasts his way through five levels of hazard-filled Battletrack. This perilous ride involves dodging the outcast bikers who inhabit the motorway, avoiding the huge cracks and potholes which now scar the Tarmac track and eventually completing the course to take the Mean Streak as his just reward.

The are two options allowing *Mean Streak* to be played solo, or with another biker – one person taking the lead role, while the other controls the outcast bikers.

The program, designed by David Bishop, is being written by the Dalali software team, and should be available around mid October for the princely sum of £9.95 on cassette.

The second of Mirrorsoft's up-and-coming releases features that staunch supporter of bars and sofas, that lovable lounge lizard *Andy Capp*. This evergreen character has been lurking in the pages of the Mirror for years, and has finally mustered the energy to makes his way from paper to the Commodore 64. As you can see from the picture below, Andy, Flo and all the other characters have been faithfully reproduced in pixel form. Mirrorsoft hope for a late October release – so keep an eye out.




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U.S. GOLD All American Software

Although Accolade have only released a few games in their two year existence, they have managed to ensure a consistently high standard, with earlier successes including *Hardball* (a ZZAP! Sizzler), *Psi-5 Trading Company* and *Killed Until Dead*. That level of excellence looks set to continue with their newest game, *Accolade's Comics*. This highly original piece of software is described as the 'first living comic book', and gives the player control over a binary comic book.

The storyline features the cartoon strip exploits of Steve Keene (brother of Milton), a private spy who is sent on a life and death mission to rescue the famous professor, Zoron Farad.

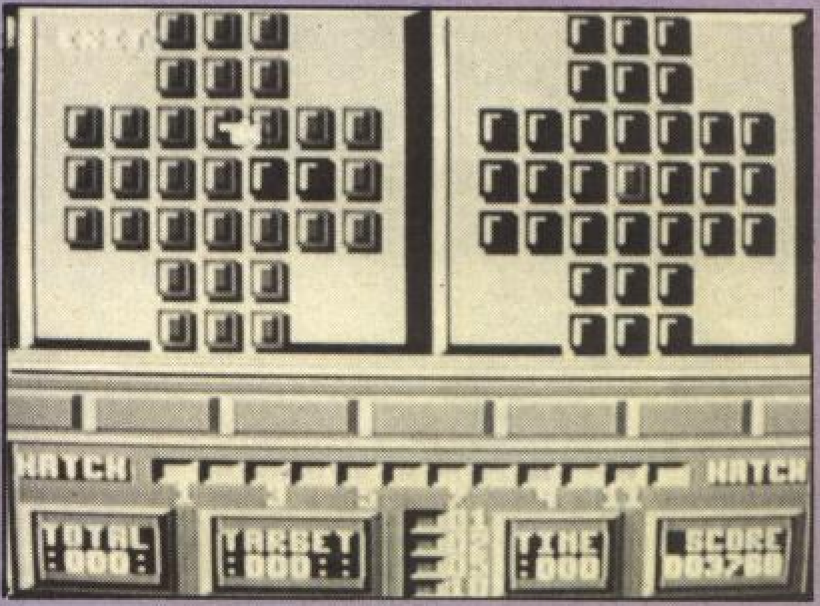
The action is displayed as a series of animated comic-style frames and allows the player to alter the progress of the tale by choosing Keene's responses to situations. This is achieved by selecting one of three different speech bubbles when prompted, or choosing a specific action whenever an arrow appears.

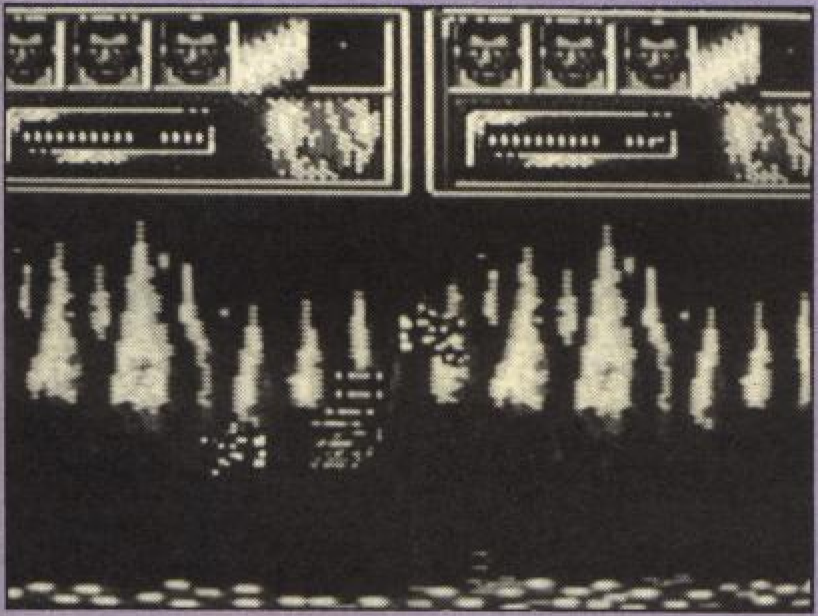
Steve has a wide range of wisecracks and smart alec comments, but one too many and the opposition just might take offence, with dire consequences. According to the twist and turn of the plot, one of eight arcade sequences may appear. The player takes direct control of the hero and guides him safely though the peril in true arcade style. Extreme care has to be take in these sub-games, as the outcome directly influences the storyline – either for better or worse. Keene starts the mission with five lives, and each time an arcade sequence is fluffed, or the wrong action is taken, one is removed from the total. When the intrepid detective finally croaks, there's a high score table which automatically saves to disk for posterity and ego-boosting.

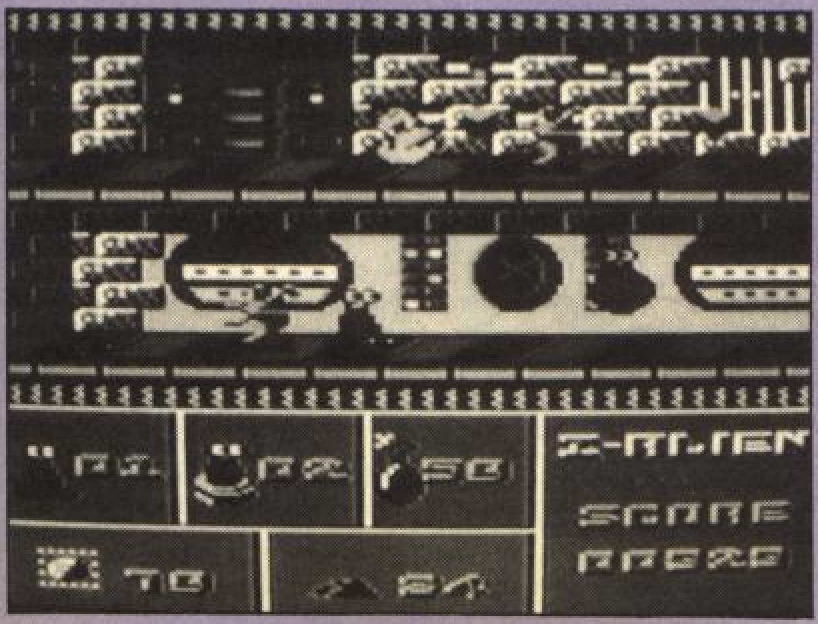
Accolade's Comics takes up *six* sides of disk and should have enough depth to keep most comic book fans coming back for more. Apparently a cassette version is pending, but, for obvious reasons, details are lacking at the present time.

Those who go to the PCW can see *Accolade's Comics* in action on the US Gold stand, the rest will have to wait until October, when it is released.









CRL

Due for release in late October is *I, Alien* (pictured bottom left), a 'cartoon style' arcade adventure which follows the exploits of an unfortunate extra-terrestrial held captive inside a hostile spacecraft.

The creature's quest for freedom initially takes place across the four-way scrolling scrolling spaceship corridors where he attempts to free his fellow aliens who are also incarcerated in the vessel. This heroic task requires the escapee to run the gauntlet of all the hostile aliens on board.

When he finally manages to escape the spacecraft, the alien has to negotiate the enemy hostile aliens' home planet, exploring paths and caverns until, in the lower reaches of the planet, the main control console and his missing spacecraft are eventually found.

Solid Air are a new team of programmers who are currently working on CRL's latest horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, *Jet Boys* (pictured above left). The action is set across a series of scenic forests and ruins, where the player takes the part of one of the Jet Boys – a team of jet-packing heroes who patrol the land in search of invading alien forces.

The third up-and-coming CRL release is *Discovery*. The action is set way out in deep space where the player lands on an ancient and fragmented space station which has to be repaired and reactivated.

Flying to each of the 12 docking platforms within the station is rewarded by a different sub-game, such as breakout or solitaire (pictured centre right). As each sub-game is completed, points are awarded, together with sections of a circuit board. Once the circuit board is complete, it is put into the Discovery's main power systems to fully re-energise the engines and thus enable it to be flown back to Earth.

ZZAP! PREVIEW





S Y S T E M 3

Following hot on the heels of the highly successful *Last Ninja* is System 3's long-awaited martial arts simulation, *Bangkok Knights*.

Huge 'cartoon style' sprites and multi-directionally scrolling backdrops portray the action as the player takes a trip to Bangkok and partakes in a kick-boxing championship. Starting life as a country boy, the player proves his worth by battling a series of local hard-men. Man Chu Man is the first opponent and is fought on the edge of a high cliff. Next comes a jungle confrontation with the psychotic Bambo. Finally the budding boxer takes a trip to the market place in the centre of town is where the loud-mouthed oriental wide-boy, Killa Kale, is tackled. Only when these three foes are defeated, can the championships be entered.

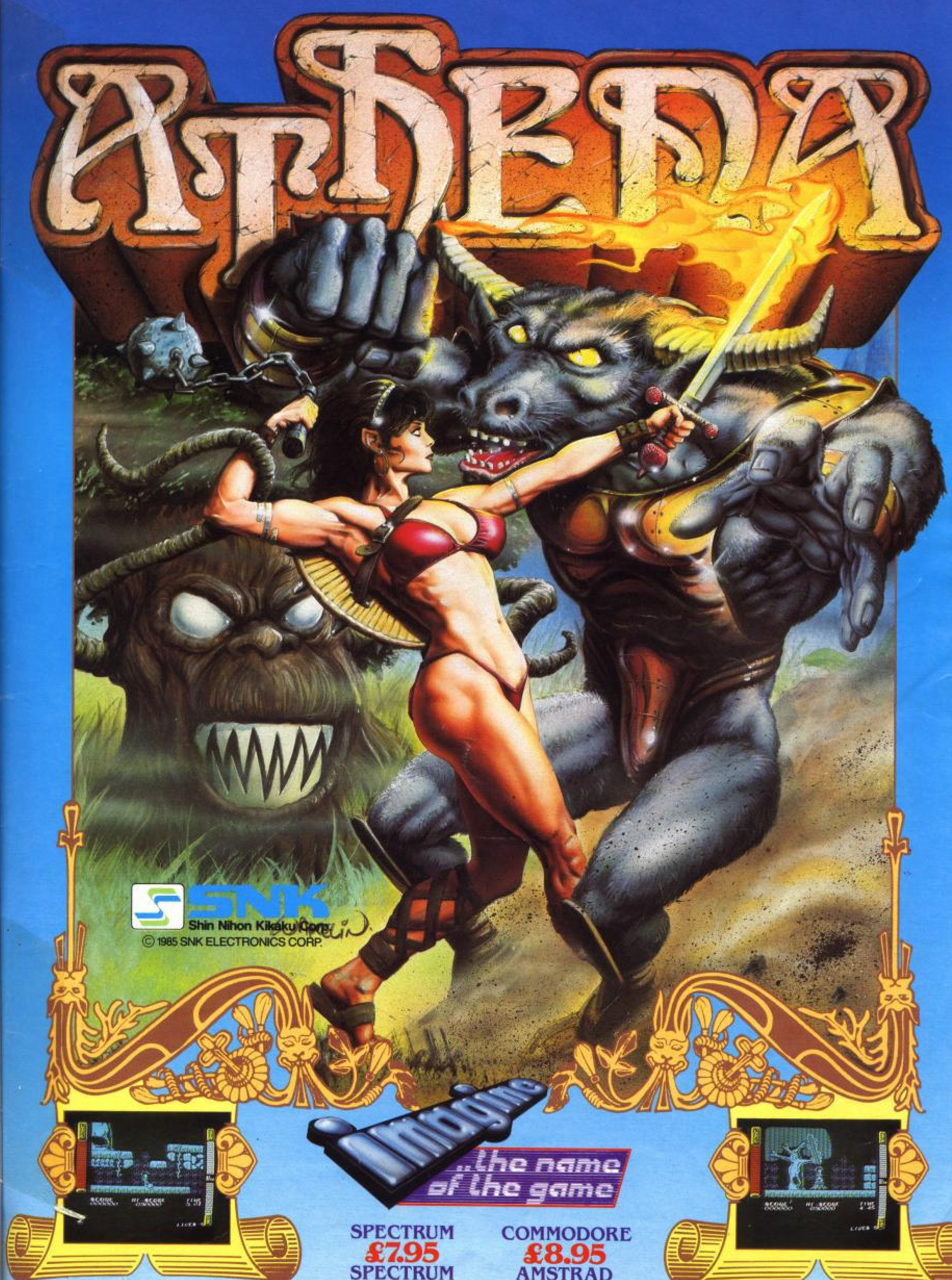
In the finals, the contestant fights four bouts against eight different opponents. Each of the fighters has a different specialised move, and these include deadly blown kisses, swift kicks to the lower regions, bone-snapping toe-stompers, nut-crunching head butts and the old favourite, Ninja Magic! Our contestant has his own special moves too, the results of which are also pretty devastating.

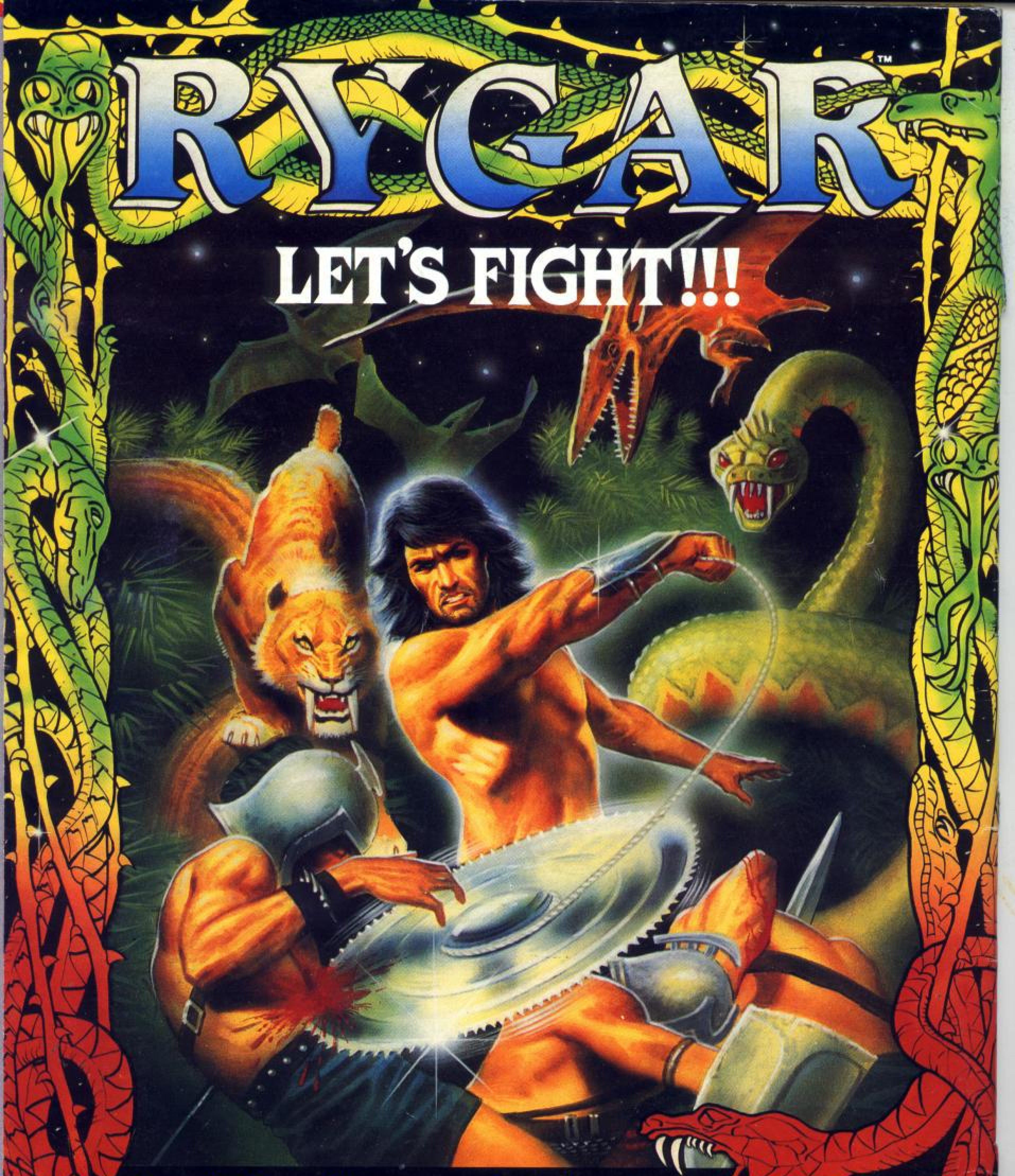
Bangkok Knights is on display at the PCW on Activision's stand, and should be available in the shops towards the end of this month, priced £9.99 on cassette and £14.99 disk.





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